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P3M3

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PlayStation 3 | PlayStation | PSP



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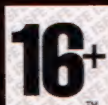
IGN

9.1 OUT OF 10

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Tom Clancy's
RAINBOW SIX

SIEGE

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PlayStation News

Friday 11-May-2007 9:43 AM
Condemned sequel gets Bloodshot
Sega unveils Condemned 2: Bloodshot for Xbox 360 and PS3

Previews

Preview
Tomb Raider: Anniversary
PS2 remake of Croft's original is vintage stuff

PlayStation News

Friday 11-May-2007 9:43 AM
Condemned sequel gets Bloodshot
Sega unveils Condemned 2: Bloodshot for Xbox 360 and PS3

PlayStation Features

Feature
GTA IV - Development Diary
Keep up to date with Rockstar's legendary sequel

PlayStation Interviews

Interview
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars Pt. 2
Let slip the stroggs of war!

CVG

Enix reveals new franchise | Army of Two not looking pretty | First look at Hydrophobia | Spider-Man

Portal PC, PS3, 360
Preview: The impossible is very, very hard

GTA IV
Feature: 50 Reasons why you need it - Part 1

Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters
Review: The platforming

Hydrophobia

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Enemy Territory: Quake Wars Pt. 2
Let slip the stroggs of war!

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News

Friday 11-May-2007 9:43 AM
Condemned sequel gets Bloodshot
Sega unveils Condemned 2: Bloodshot for Xbox 360 and PS3



COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES...
ESTABLISHED 1981

PSM3 Start



“Pah. Stopping Megatron is small change”

Optimus Prime might face serious opposition in our cover game on page 23 – hope you like your collector's edition issue, by the way – but it'll be easier than transforming the fate of movie licenses. Only a few issues back, we tipped *Pirates Of The Caribbean* on PS3 as one to watch, and we were right – for all the wrong reasons, as you'll see in our exclusive review on page 66. *Spider Man 3*? Flick to page 72 and you'll see why our review copy was 'delayed'. *Transformers* may not rewrite the rules, but it does capture the feeling of being a 60-foot 'bot in a destructible world – and, sometimes, that's all the movie 'experience' you need. Licenses aren't about dull scene-by-scene recreations, but nailing split-second thrills.

Daniel Dawkins Editor
psm3@futurenet.co.uk



In the making of this issue of PSM3...
432 awful 'Prime' puns
Two disappointing movie licenses
One interview with Optimus himself

The PSM3 Promise



✓ The sharpest opinions
Every bit of the magazine is dedicated to giving you more information. If we're worried that a feature in a game isn't working, we'll not only tell you about it, but we'll have a word with the developer too.



✓ The biggest games
Fact is, if a game makes it into the pages of PSM3 then it's something worth knowing about. PSM3 says no to lazy page fillers and boring 'me too' games.



✓ The richest detail
We finish every game we review. Our secrets are the result of us playing the game and finding them ourselves. We've got what you want to know and tell you how you want to hear it.



✓ The most committed videogame mag team
The PSM3 team live and breathe PlayStation. There's no game we haven't played and there's no end to our quest for knowledge and gaming greatness.



✓ The best DVD action
We've got the best DVD in the business. We cram it with the best PS3, PS2 and PSP games each and every month. For free.

Three to read first...

“Captain Jack's meant to be a coward, not Lara in a pirate suit”

Why *Pirates Of The Caribbean* proves a disappointment – page 66



“Looks and feels like a movie blockbuster”

Drake's Fortune wows us all – page 42

“Cars can be picked up and thrown like Matchbox miniatures”

Transformers is set to be the most destructive game of summer – page 23



► Start

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Sony announced loads of new games at their Gamers' Day – read all about absolutely everything they had to offer.

23 Transformers

The game of the movie of the toys is on its way to PlayStation 3. We get an exclusive hands-on, and a special interview with Optimus Prime himself.

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The greatest gamer vids around. Watch them and see how mad the world can be.

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Never miss an issue. All you need to do is go online, sit back, and wait.

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Exclusive hands-on with the latest *Hawk*. Will the three new styles be enough to launch it into the stratosphere again? And can it out-ollie EA's *Skate*? Read on...

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FEATURE

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Nucleus
Metal Slug Anthology
Smash Court Tennis 3
Impossible Mission
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Making a man's face look like particularly scrambled egg in *Fight Night Round 3*.

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Hidden bits in *SOCOM 2*, *Forbidden Siren 2* and *Castlevania*.



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The worst Transformers ever.



"As dark and violent as its predecessor"

The characters have changed, but there's no doubting the lineage of *Manhunt 2* – page 40



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DVD Highlights New PS3, PS2 and PSP videos

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PS3 HD FOOTAGE

CALL OF DUTY 4

In 2007! Shock twist exposed

PS3 HD FOOTAGE

BURNOUT PARADISE

See EA's explosive racer in Hi-Def - only with PSM3

NEW!
Dual-sided flip-disc with super quality 720p HD PS3 movies!

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FEATURING Manhunt 2 | Skate | Quake Wars | SingStar | Gran Turismo HD | Medal Of Honor: Airborne | Tomb Raider Anniversary | Colin McRae: DIRT | The Dark

SIDE 2: HOW TO

Copy your HD files onto your PS3

DO THIS

Step one
You need to download the hi-def movies onto your hard drive to view them properly. Insert Side B of the disc into your PS3, then click across to Video on the cross-media bar.

THEN THIS

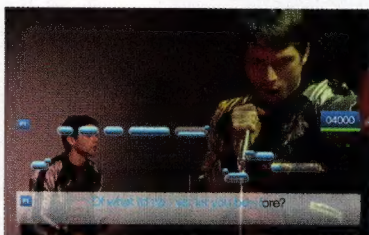
Step two
Select the disc and press **X**. Choose Display All from the menu, and highlight the trailers you want to Copy and download.

GET THIS

Step three
The trailers will download to your hard drive in a few minutes or less. When they're done, they'll appear as rolling video thumbnails - click **X** to play your chosen HD movie. Enjoy.

PS3, PS2 & PSP footage

SIDE A: DVD FOOTAGE The summer release schedule might be bare, but we've got brand new footage of *Skate*, *Spider-Man 3*, *Armored Core 4* and *Enemy Territory: Quake Wars*. Slip the disc into your DVD player, quick.



SingStar

PS3 *SingStar* will let you take your karaoke 'talent' online. Watch, enjoy, and wait for your shot at fame.



The Darkness

Yet more footage from what's perhaps PS3's most eagerly awaited shooter. Prepare to be (quite) scared.

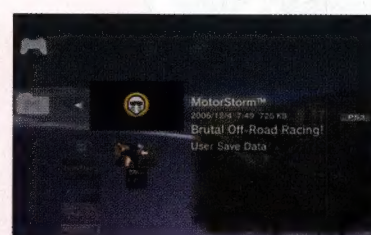
PS3 HD video files

SIDE B: PS3 HD FILES Our brand new HD files - which need to be downloaded to your hard drive (see above) - are a must-see. This month, you've got hot new action from *Burnout Paradise*, *Call Of Duty 4*, *Lair* and stacks more.



Burnout Paradise

See the brand-new trailer of *Burnout's* debut on PlayStation 3. Get ready to mash your motors.



PS3 Game Saves

To get 100% complete PS3 game saves (including *Motorstorm*) pop Side B in your PS3 and see page xx.

+ *Lair* | *Colin McRae: DIRT* | *Manhunt 2* | *Jericho* | *Rainbow Six Vegas* | **More**

+ *Medal Of Honor: Airborne* | *Harry Potter* | *Hot Shots Golf* | *Skate* | **More**

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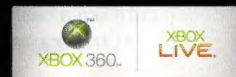


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PLAYSTATION 3

PlayStation 2



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Frontline

Hard news, all PlayStation action

PS3 REPORT

PS3's second wave breaks in San Diego

It's the coming-out party for the season's biggest games

With E3 in an enigmatic state of flux – there will be one this year, but in what form we don't know – leaving dozens of booth babes reduced to handing out coupons for truck-stop breakfasts – probably – the world needs a new place to learn about games. And, if they're Sony games – though some other companies were there too – then that place is San Diego. Their Gamers' Day in May was the place to see how this year's top titles are progressing.

Grab a pad

With only a smattering of genuinely new games on display, the theme of the event was sequels we expected, and hands-on time with titles we've previously only seen teased. *Heavenly Sword* put in a strong showing, with another brutal scrap showcasing the new stance-switching

abilities. *Drake's Fortune* (see page 42) also looked impressive – although hiding behind scenery is initially a bit fiddly, snap-shooting enemies in the head is immensely satisfying, and the main character's nowhere near as despicable as the Gap-ad extra seen at E3 last year. *Lair* continued to look slightly disappointing, with controls that we still can't get used to.

The biggest playable surprise was *LittleBigPlanet* – controllable in all its four-way majesty, we finally got a taste of what it's like to bounce through levels yanking scenery to bits, stealing sponges and messing about with those jetpacks. There was no chance to have a go at the customisation settings – we'll have to wait a bit longer before we can deface levels with obscene stickers – but it's looking cute like a basket of kittens.

At the opposite end of the friendliness

No place like Home
Home's looking slick and easy to use, with plenty of actions for players to use – mostly dance moves, admittedly – and minigames to play. If we've one reservation it's the lack of, ahem, controversial content – which ought to be rectified by letting users generate their own stuff. Make it happen, Sony.



spectrum was new *SOCOM* (page 12), available in both PS3 and PSP flavours. On PS3, *SOCOM Confrontation* will be online-only, and support up to 32 people playing as special forces teams from around the world. Meanwhile, *SOCOM Tactical Strike* on PSP offers a stripped-down version of its PS2 cousin's real-time tactical action. Also announced for PSP was a new Syphon Filter, titled *Logan's Shadow*, adding 360 degree underwater combat, blind-firing and human shields. It looks solid. A brief look at *God Of War: Chains Of Olympus* (page 14) rounded out a strong showing for PSP, with Kratos looking as brutal as ever on the small screen.

Folklore of the land

Some new titles had a distinctly orcish flavour. One of them was *Folklore*, developed by Genji-makers, Game Republic.



ON THE DISC
Check Side B for the latest
re-def game trailers

Simply put, it's about tracking down monsters and then stealing their powers with some deft Sixaxis-work, before using your newly-enhanced skills to kill even bigger beasts until you've got more than 100 creature powers in the bag. Slightly less exciting was THQ's *Conan*, which still looks like a standard hack'n'slash take on everyone's favourite barbarian and doesn't excite much as yet.

On the PlayStation Network, meanwhile, *Pain* (page 18) looks impressive and hilarious, though we were less enamoured by *High Velocity Bowling*'s use of the Sixaxis – it's easier to just flick the pad a bit than actually make a bowling motion. A good show for Sony, then, with some impressive games. PlayStation 3 is slowly gathering steam.

Pub Sony | Dev Sony | ETA Various

Updated! Hands-on with the best in show

What were the best games that Sony pulled out of the bag in San Diego?



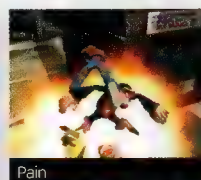
Drake's Fortune

Imagine *Tomb Raider* with a terrified man fighting pirates and you've got Naughty Dog's latest game in a nutshell. The platforming needs work, but the gun battles are a brilliant blend of cowering behind cover and braving vicious crossfire. No wonder the poor bloke looks so scared all the time.



LittleBigPlanet

Just in case you're wondering if this can really be as cute as it looks, consider the following – if you press the 'slap' button while the other player's looking sad, you'll hug them rather than hit them. The customisation options weren't playable, but the four-player platforming is frantic, adorable fun.



Pain

'Ragdoll physics Jackass' is an idea that seems like it should have been done five years ago, but the massive environments make it more exciting than may have been previously possible. Our only problem: the collisions are too cartoony, and we'd prefer it if our human dummy could sound like he's in genuine pain.



Ratchet & Clank

If you've seen the trailer you'll be familiar with the Groovitron – the disco ball bomb that makes enemies strut like a skinny Travolta – but have you seen the ground-igniting Combustor, or the mini remote attack chopper known as the Dizzitron? No, obviously. Certainly to be the best *Ratchet* ever.



Warhawk

Sony's hover-tastic multiplayer extravaganza continues to improve on our (low) expectations, with the introduction of several new levels, including a desert section with a huge valley running through it. Interestingly, it'll be available via the PlayStation store and on Blu-ray – with an enclosed headset.

The Opinionator

"Nobody's using PSP as a media device"

Remember the promises they made? When PSP first came out, we flung our MP3 players on a fire and snapped all of our DVDs, convinced that we'd be ingesting all the culture we needed via Sony's widescreen portable baby. Two years on, all we've got to show for it is singed fingers, a sellotaped-together copy of Training Day and an unrelenting hatred of the analogue nub. Bah.

Telly addicts

So, with Sony's lighter slimline PSP heading for the shelves, what can they do to make it an essential buy? Well, it's partly about format snobbery. Simply put, downloading tunes and TV shows to PSP is slightly too fiddly. If we're going to carry just one media player around, we'll be needing a firmware upgrade that makes synchronising PSP with a PC idiot-proof and easy, letting us download MP3s straight

from MySpace or wherever to memory stick. A service offering TV downloads for a modest price - let's say a quid - would let us watch

The Simpsons on the bus and simultaneously let everyone forget about the 'films on UMD' farce.

Original sin

More importantly, though, the games need to be must-buys.

Right now, too many PSP games are simply scaled-down ports of PlayStation 2 classics, with slightly less features and slightly longer loading times. If PSP's going to be indispensable, it needs more games like LocoRoco - titles geared to the portable format, geared to its strengths, and made specifically for playing on the move. Sony needs to invest in first-

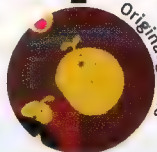
party software and encourage the big hitters - think Capcom and Konami - to make PSP-exclusive games. And, of course, they need to fix that blasted analogue nub. **Joel Snape**



Tunes



Telly



Original games

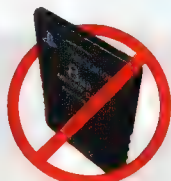


Smiley face

Myth-Buster

SEEN THIS?

It's easy to transfer PS2 saves onto PS3



THE TRUTH

We wish... Sadly the truth is that you have to be quite determined to get PS2 saves onto your PS3. Getting PSone saves onto PS2 just involved slipping in your old card. This time, however, you will need to get a Memory Card Adaptor for PS3 which connects to the console through a USB slot. Fortunately you can now buy these in most retail outlets - including GAME - for £12.99, but up until a few weeks ago you had to contact Sony directly and order one for 20 quid. But another drawback is that you can't transfer PlayStation 2 saved data back onto the card again, so you'll have to stick with playing on PS3 to continue the game. One advantage, though, is that you can swap saved game data with other users over the PlayStation Network.



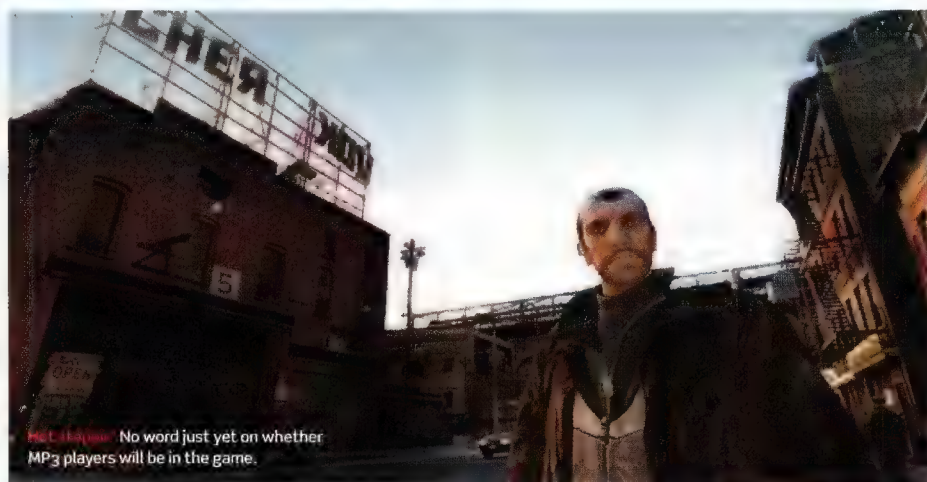
The latest news on PlayStation's hottest games, every issue

1 Grand Theft Auto 4

Cashpoints and fingers
Rockstar are still drip-feeding info, but here's the latest we can bring you - ATMs may play a role for depositing and withdrawing cash, Niko can access bus timetables, climbing is an important part of Niko's skill set, there will be a co-op mode to the multi-player but you won't

be able to play through the whole game that way, the characters have identifiable digits on their hands instead of the claws they had previously and, finally, Niko will slam his head on the steering wheel if he crashes. Oh, and the radio stations will be more diverse, with foreign musicians on offer.

Pub Rockstar | Dev Rockstar North | ETA October



No word just yet on whether MP3 players will be in the game.

"Fight a cyclops which gets eaten by a dragon"

God Of War PSP page 14



"Niko's head slams against the wheel if he crashes"

Wacky, freakie
but don't ex

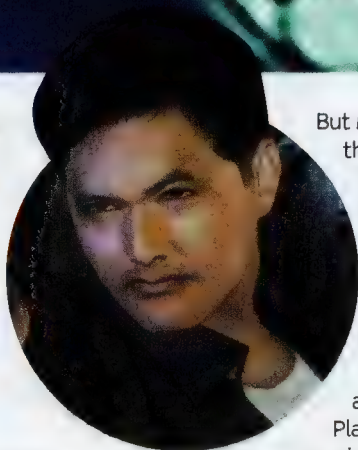
2 Stranglehold Collector's Edition announced

Midway are putting together the ultimate John Woo package for this summer – the *Stranglehold* PS3 Collector's Edition, which squeezes the stylish-looking, ultra-violent shooter *Stranglehold* onto one Blu-ray disc with *Hard Boiled*, the 1992 movie that inspired said game. Now you'll be able watch Chow Yun-Fat twirl and pirouette through a hail of bullets in action classic, and then try to replicate his grace and poise under fire in game.

Pub Midway | Dev Midway Chicago | ETA August

3 NFS Pro Street Yet more NFS action

EA have been keeping their finger on the pulse of US car tuner culture, so you can expect even more motor-modding here.

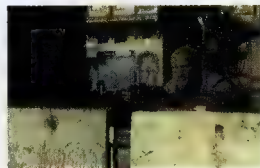


But *Pro Street* leaves behind the dark canyons of *Carbon* for, well, the street. You'll likely see cars ranging from the Mitsubishi 483 to Dodge Vipers, online multi-player and another 'bleeding edge' soundtrack. And if you can't trade your motors and paint jobs over the PlayStation Network, we'll eat our piston rings.

Pub EA | Dev EA Black Box | ETA November

4 SOCOM Confrontation Taking the war online

PS3 needs more online games, so it makes perfect sense for Sony to have announced a Network-only version of *SOCOM* at their recent Gamer's Day event in San Diego. This will allow up to 32 gamers to compete simultaneously across five different North African maps and there will be regular organised events and tournaments, so you can challenge other warmongers for



NFS and *SOCOM Pro Street* looks far better than *Carbon* PS3, and *SOCOM* adds to PS3's online canon.

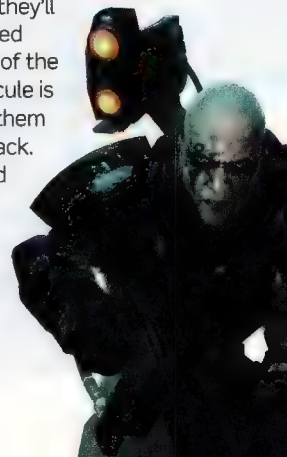
supremacy. You'll also be able to customise your uniform. We're hoping to be able to maraud the deserts in an 'ironic' Che Guevara t-shirt, ourselves. Visually, it looks exactly as you'd expect – i.e. sandy.

Pub Sony | Dev Slant Six Games | ETA November

5 Blacksite: Area 51 Squad controls kept simple

Details on how the squad dynamic works for Midway's sci-fi shooter have emerged, and it's extremely simple. Just point your reticle to the place where you want them, then hold **RT** and off they'll trot to their designated position. Another jab of the button while the reticle is over a monster tells them which baddies to attack. It's all very simple and immediate to keep the alien-murdering action fast and nicely intense.

Pub Midway | Dev Midway Austin | ETA September

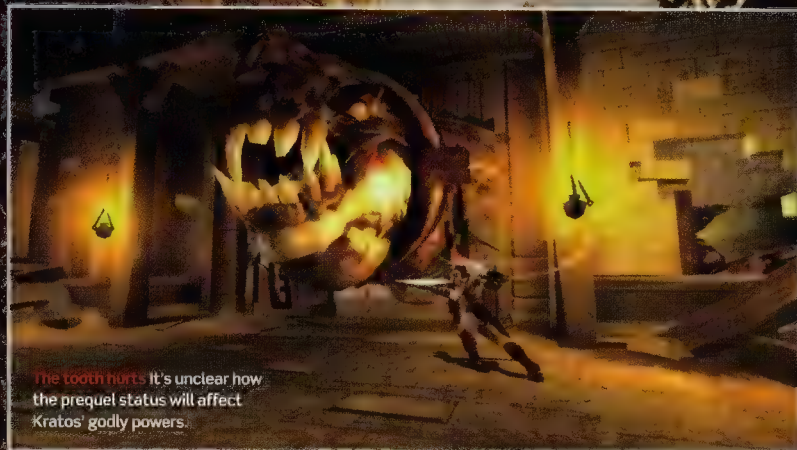


PSP REPORT

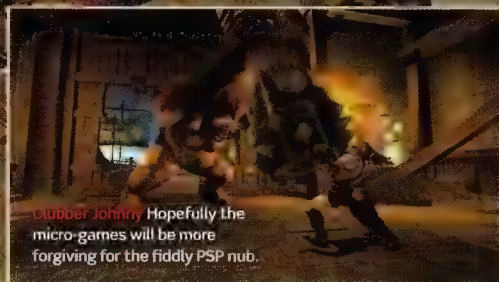
Kratos ready for war on PSP

Pocket-sized prequel promises biggest bosses ever

Although *God Of War 2* ends on a teaser for the biggest Gods vs Titans ruck ever on PS3, the next time you'll see Kratos will be on PSP. The prequel - *God Of War: Chains Of Olympus* - details Kratos' early adventures as a servant of the gods, although he'll still be sporting his trademark black and ashen skin. A threat to the gods will take him from the Gates Of Hades to the depths of Tartarus - sort of the underworld equivalent of Moss Side. More importantly, it'll feature some gigantic enemies - the early demo sees Kratos fighting a huge cyclops, which then gets eaten by an enormous dragon. With new development studio Ready At Dawn - also responsible for handheld class *Daxter* - taking the reins, this should just about rate our bloodlust while we wait for part three.



The tooth hurts It's unclear how the prequel status will affect Kratos' godly powers.



Smaller Johnny Hopefully the micro-games will be more forgiving for the fiddy PSP nub.



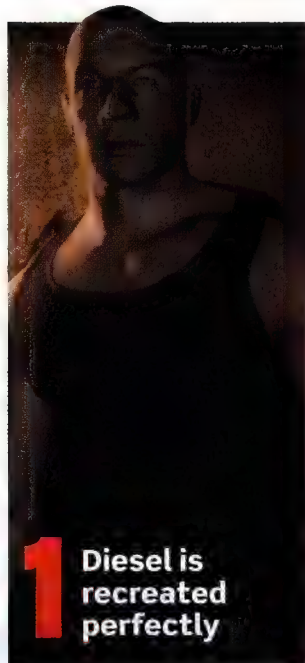
"Smart money's on a free-roaming Gotham City"

The Dark Knight page 18

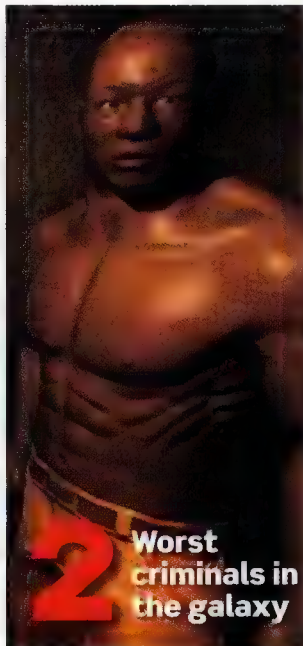
PS3 REPORT

The Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena

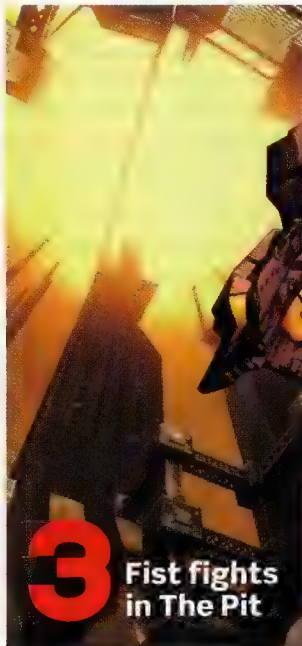
An HD remake of an Xbox classic with brand new content



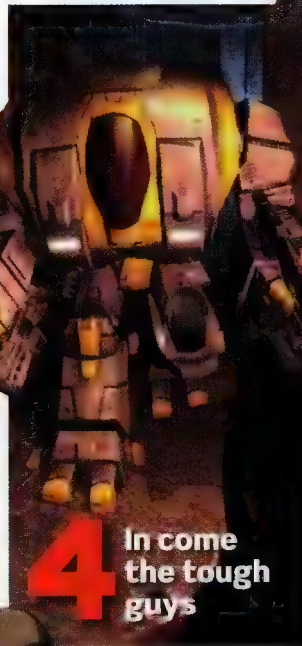
1 Diesel is recreated perfectly



2 Worst criminals in the galaxy



3 Fist fights in The Pit



4 In come the tough guys



5 Bring out the guns

This is set just before *Chronicles Of Riddick*, a sci-fi action film starring Vin Diesel. *Riddick*, the game, came out on Xbox, but now hits PS3 as *Dark Athena*. **(1) Diesel is recreated perfectly**, with face and voice both officially provided by the big man. The game is set in a prison designed to hold **(2) the worst criminals in the galaxy**, which makes it almost impossible to escape from. But if anyone can, Riddick can. The jail is split up into different areas operated by gangs of cons.

Helping them out can get you access to restricted sections and aid your escape, but you'll have to get your hands dirty via betting, stabbing people, nicking stuff and so on. You take part in **(3) fist fights in The Pit** and it's one of the best bits of the game. Riddick beats up the toughest inmates and becomes the prison 'daddy'. Riddick also has night vision goggles, so sneaking about in the



shadows and sticking guards in the neck with screwdrivers is common. But then **(4) in come the tough guys** with armour. When this happens it's time to **(5) bring out the guns** and the game suddenly becomes a traditional FPS, with gory ragdoll physics and big weapons. It's the variety of the missions that makes *Riddick* great, and the PS3 version comes with as-yet-unannounced extra single player levels.

Pub Sierra | Dev Starbreeze | ETA October

The PSM3 Wrong-Righter

Rubbing the wax-hot polish of truth over past issues

SPIDEY 3 SAME AS SPIDEY 2 ☒ RIGHT

In our preview a couple of months ago, we said that "little had changed bar a hi-res sheen". As it turns out, that was bang on the money. *Spider-Man 3* is more or less the same as its sequel, but as it turns out, that has meant us feeling let-down more than anything else. Bah.

1 It's disappointing and exciting all at once

From the **SPIDEY-SENSE** to the State of the Union, where our demo began

PSM 87 page 41

PS3 REMOTE CONTROL ☒ WRONG

See this PS3 remote control we featured last month? It doesn't exist, although Joytech - the company we said made it - are in the process of creating one. It probably won't look like this, though. This is a concept image. Head over to www.joytech.net to check for updates. Apologies to Joytech for our balls-up. Oops.

PSM 88 page 105



TONY HAWK'S 9 VID EDITING ☒ RIGHT

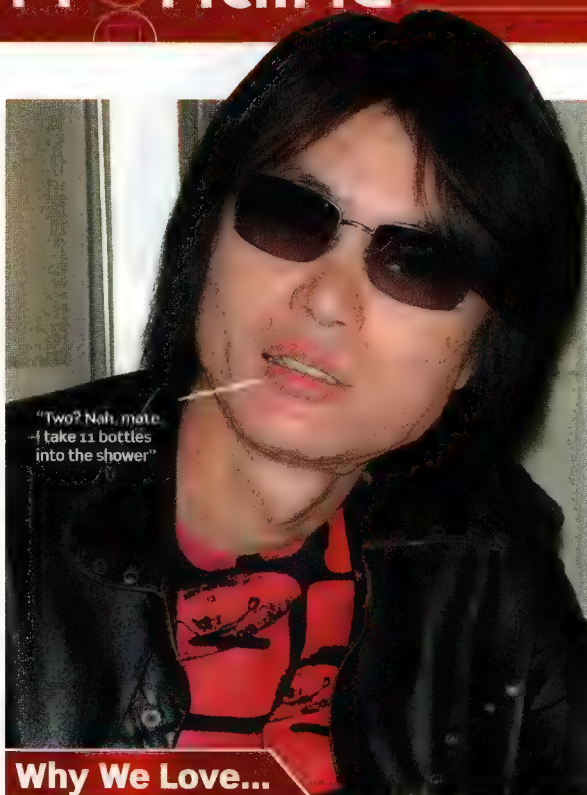
"Expect online-sharing video-editing," we said of the new *Tony Hawk* game last month. One trip to Activision to play it later and - lo - we were right correct. We didn't quite get the name spot-on - *Project 9*, we said, not *Proving Ground*, but still.

Trick'-style innovation, and full, online-sharing, video-editing. Check back next month for an exclusive look at Tony's risk-taking latest.

PROVED RIGHT

PSM 88 page 16

EMAIL PSM3 @
Spotted some Bertie Bollax in PSM3? Tell us: psm3@futurenet.co.uk



Why We Love...

Tomonobu Itagaki

A boob-mad eccentric who always speaks his mind

What has he done?

He joined Tecmo in 1992 and made *Tecmo Bowl* for the Famicom, but you'll probably be more familiar with his work in taking lady-bump physics to terrifying new dimensions with the *Dead Or Alive* series, originally designed as part of a bet with the head of the company that he could make a successful beat-em-up. Three sequels, a beach volleyball spin-off and a film where Holly Valance beats people up without wearing a bra later, he's probably won.

Tekken series in general, and the dreadful *Death By Degrees* in particular.

And when faced with criticism that *Ninja Gaiden* was a bit on the tricky side, he responded by making a version that was even harder, with a patronising 'Ninja Dog' difficulty setting that made it easier if you liked, but forced you to wear pink.

What's he doing now?

He's gone back to work on *Dead Or Alive* 5. He's also working on a new secret title known as 'Project Progressive'.

Who are you?

Name Tomonobu Itagaki
Role Director
Key Games *Dead Or Alive*
Ninja Gaiden



Why we like him?

He knows what he likes, and isn't shy about speaking his mind. He's been unflinchingly critical of the

The Insider

He's the man who knows too much...

Batman has found an ally in Pandemic Studios, after years of moonlighting between developers and various duff games. The team behind the brilliant *Mercenaries* and *Destroy All Humans* are working on **The Dark Knight** and I'm expecting Bruce Wayne to swoop onto next-gen consoles. Smart money's on a free-roaming Gotham City, beautiful explosions and tense confrontations with the Joker – plus a darker style than the recently confirmed **Lego Batman** game, in line with Frank Miller's *Dark Knight* graphic novel series.

Another skilled team of developers busily planning new titles are **Team Ico**. According to sources they're working on not one, but two original games for PS3, and one is rumoured to be very closely linked with *Ico* and *Shadow Of*

"Bruce Wayne is swooping onto next-gen consoles"

The Colossus in terms of atmosphere. Exciting, eh? Meanwhile, Rockstar have just announced that **Midnight Club: Los Angeles** will be heading to PS3 in 2008. Cold, hard facts are scarce but Rockstar supremo Sam Houser has been quoted as saying "It will redefine the idea of a completely immersive racing game experience, both offline and online."

More details are trickling out regarding the upcoming **Pro Evolution Soccer 7** – name to be confirmed. Internet insiders suggest it'll be presented in full 1080p resolution, but there are rumours of a new one-on-one tackling system, more unique dribbling animations, a licensing breakthrough (optimists suggest the Premier League and Bundesliga will have proper kits and team names) plus a name change too. At a guess? *Pro Evo 2008* or something like that. Oh, and don't make any bets on whether Peter Brackley and Trevor Brooking will be returning for commentary duties either.

Radical Entertainment – the folk behind *Scarface* and *The Simpsons Hit & Run* (see the special feature on page 92) – are rumoured to be working on a title that builds on the environmental carnage found in one of their other games, *The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction*. Check back next issue for more details on this.

On to a more sedate subject now – Tsutomu Kouno has been secretly whispering about the upcoming sequel to his ever-so-sweet **LocoRoco**. Despite nervously quipping that he'd be 'scolded' if he gave away too many details, he went on to promise that the follow-up would feature "new gameplay based on physical calculation and crowd AI" as well as "a few surprises" – which is all in line with our exclusive details in PSM87. OK, it's not exactly burning news, but it does confirm it's definitely in the works. Another title that's confirmed to be on the way – as I alluded to last month – is Sega's thriller, **Condemned 2: Bloodshot**. The sequel to the Xbox 360 title won't be here until 2008 but PSM3 will have more news next month.

Knight rider Frank Miller's gritty *Dark Knight* books should make for an atmospheric Batman game.

"Features brand new Simpsons characters"

The Simpsons page 18

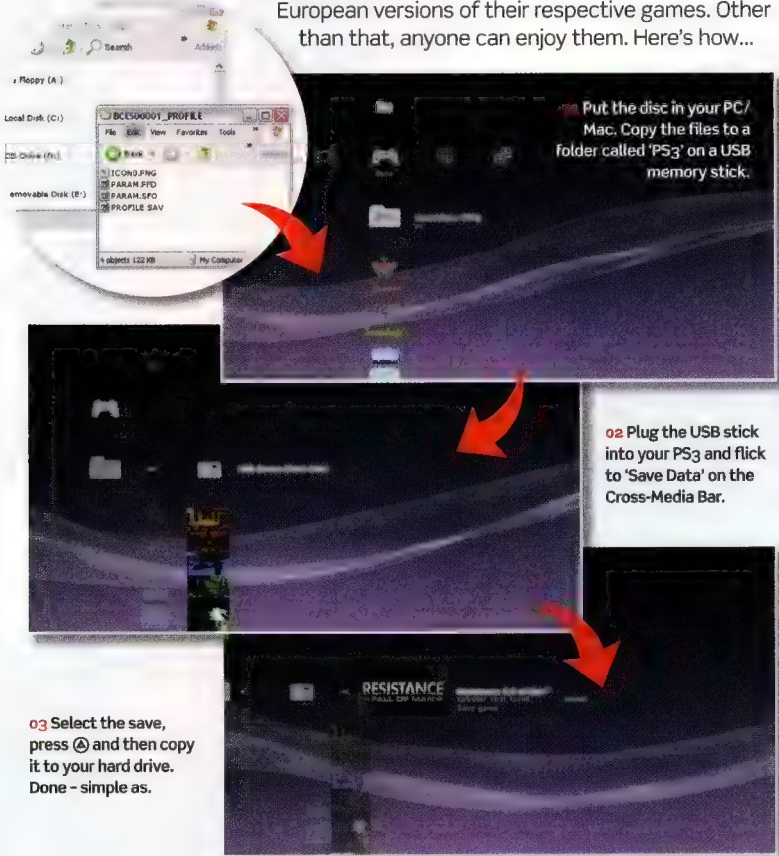


PS3 ADVICE

Copy saves from our DVD to your PS3

Just follow these easy steps...

So not only are we giving you HD movies to copy to your PS3, but now we're filling side B of our disc with saved game files. Can't be arsed finishing *Resistance* 100%? Don't bother – just copy our saved game and enjoy having everything unlocked. It's easy, although the saves we feature on the disc will only be compatible with the European versions of their respective games. Other than that, anyone can enjoy them. Here's how...



PES Rankings

Our PES Rankings league needs YOU

Head to <http://www.pesrankings.com/events/viewevent/?id=7651> and enter **qinUUpfX** to join PSM3 Super League#2 and register for the PES Rankings league. If you haven't already, don't worry it doesn't take long. You'll then get the chance to win free games, and if you're hoping of playing in the European Finals in Seville this year (date TBA), then you can't afford to miss this – there are 24 times the points up for grabs here than in a standard match. Good luck.



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PS3 IDIOCY

Sony deals out the Pain to the PS3's network shop

Don't try this at home, idiots.

With so many games focusing on hurting others, it's nice to see one where the only people getting injured are you, mimes and the occasional monkey. And that's the premise of *Idol Minds' Pain* – it's just you, a man-sized catapult and a city full of things to ricochet off, crash through or be run over by. Wherever you start, the idea is to find the best injury line – so you might, for instance, propel yourself gut-first into a train, knowing that it'll knock you into some scaffolding. As things get more complicated, you'll be able to cause elaborate chain reactions – the teaser trailer sees the main character

dislodge a giant-sized bowling ball which starts to topple towards him. Chimps and street artists buff up the character roster for multi-play, and downloadable levels should keep the violence fresh – apparently one is set in a theme park. Not the face!



Stick man challenge

Now with added trickiness

Okay, if you didn't guess that last month's rendition of a man climbing a pipe was *Splinter Cell* then you're officially a dunce, but we've decided to harden things up for this edition of the scribble-based guessing game that's sweeping the nation. Clue: look at the details.



PS3 REPORT

Just say d'on

Next Simpsons game on the way – fans cautiously optimistic

Simpsons games have varied in quality over the years – anybody remember *Simpsons Wrestling*? – but creator Matt Groening's already calling this one the "most ambitious ever", and we're inclined to agree.

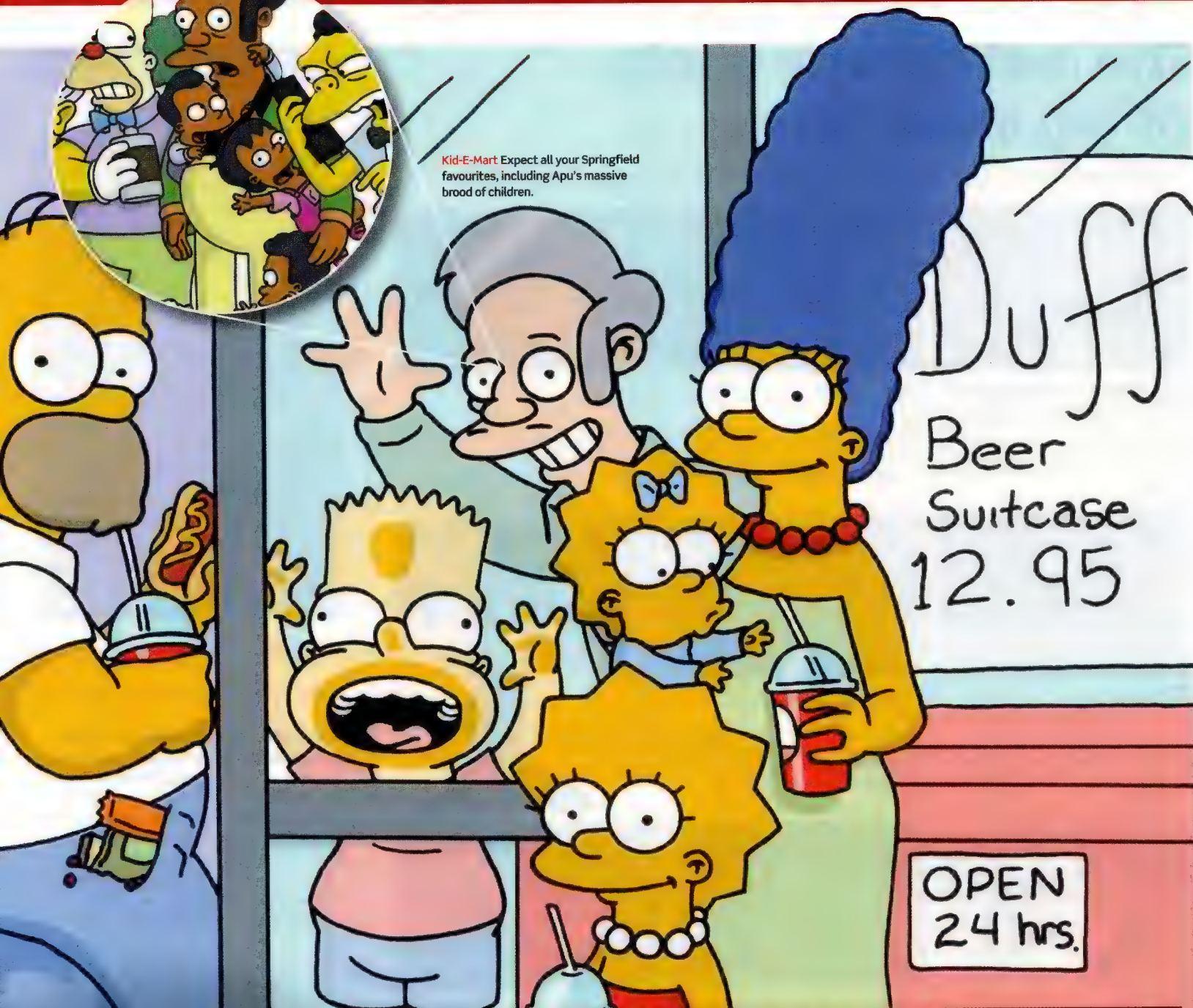
With *Hit & Run* cramming in as many in-jokes as possible, *The Simpsons Game*, as it's called, is taking a different tack, creating new environments – like the Duff Brewery's annual eating competition – and supposedly including a set of brand-new characters. EA are promising an hour of "TV-quality" material in cut-scene form, with three of the show's writers (albeit ones you probably haven't heard of) working on the

"Blow each other up with ludicrous weapons"

Worms Open Warfare 2 page 20



Kid-E-Mart Expect all your Springfield favourites, including Apu's massive brood of children.



script, and all of the main cast do their own voices. The premise? The first family have discovered that they're in a game and invented their own superpowers. Lisa can meditate to make environments shift, while Marge is able to harangue passers-by into doing her bidding with a megaphone. Other innovations include a shift in graphical style - this is the first EA Simpsons title to use cel-shading - and a set of multi-player minigames.

In summary, then? It's either be an essential part of the Simpsons canon that doesn't rely on quoting lines from Mr. Plow to be loveable, or a mildly entertaining platformer with a few new jokes in it. Pray it's the former.

Features Five good reasons to be excited

Fat jokes and Bart in a cape: always funny



Comic obesity

Homer's special power is being able to eat as much as he wants, turning him into a giant flabby ball. In this form, he can roll around like a cholesterol-stuffed Katamari in his bid to scoff enough to win the Duff eating competition.



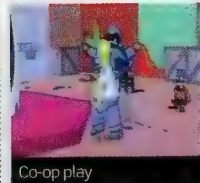
Hot fat

But that's not all. If Homer eats the famous Guatemalan Insanity Pepper he turns into a living ball of lava, making him temporarily invincible. In later 'episodes' he'll be able to ingest helium and float to higher up areas.



Doing the Bartman

Bart's power is the ability to dress up as his superhero alter-ego and use his cape to fly to previously inaccessible sections. Based on the trailer, it seems he can also use a sort of 'Bartarang' thing to get around on ziplines.



Co-op play

Each episode sees you switching between two members of the family to solve puzzles, but - akin to *Lego Star Wars 2* - it's possible to play as both at once with a friend. They can simply prod you to join in or drop out at any time.



New gags

In the past, Simpsons games have relied on nudge-wink references to old shows for their chuckles - this time, the dialogue's brand new. "Some of the lines are so dirty, they made the cast cry," promises writer Tim Long. Huh?

The last minute shots of big importance

The freshest pics, squeezed in as we go to press

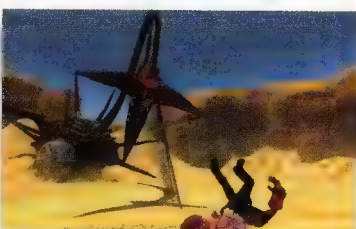


PSP **Silent Hill Origins** Hands-on test reveals good things

Details Pub Konami | **Dev** Konami | **Genre** Survival horror

Lowdown Hill fans will instantly fall in love with *Origins*. The game opens with you, trucker Travis Barker, finding Alessa, the little girl whose brutal torture caused the town to go bad, burning to death inside her family home. This is the moment that set the SH saga in motion and you get to be there, experiencing it first-hand. Control-wise the game feels like traditional *Silent Hill*, but with a new combat system – you have to use bits of the environment as makeshift weapons too. Ouch.

ETA October



PS3 **Hellboy** Coming out of the underworld

Details Pub Konami | **Dev** Krome Studios | **Genre** Action

Lowdown Everyone's favourite Nazi-bashing demon's still creeping towards a release, although the early code still looks like it could do with a bit of gentle tweaking before it's unleashed on the world. Hellboy's going up against his arch-nemesis Herman Von Klempt – a severed teutonic head in a jar – but all we've seen so far is him smashing mini-demons known as Bambinis to bits with chunks of broken scenery. More soon.

ETA October

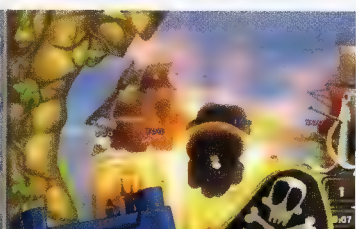
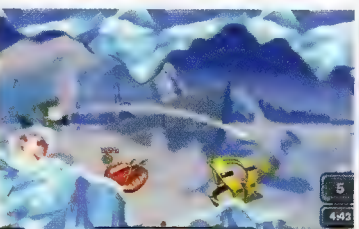
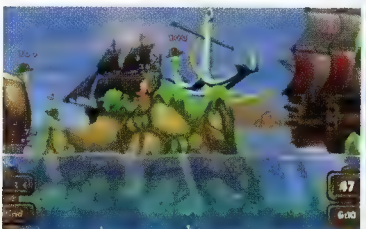


PSP **Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade Squadron** Time to go Solo

Details Pub Activision | **Dev** Rebellion | **Genre** Third-person shooter

Lowdown After years of team PSM3 drunkenly ringing up Activision and pitching them a game called *Han Solo: Intergalactic Smuggler*, they've finally gone ahead and done it. Sort of. *Renegade Squadron* will focus on the Corellian captain's adventures as he travels the galaxy, recruiting scum and villains to join him, and flying classic Star Wars ships like the Millennium Falcon and Darth Vader's TIE fighter. It will also feature 16-player online scraps, and eight-way ad-hoc play.

ETA December



PSP **Worms Open Warfare 2** PSP gets worms again

Details Pub THQ | **Dev** Team 17 | **Genre** Party

Lowdown This time around, the age-old multi-player party game – for newbies, each player takes a team of worms and tries to blow up the other with a variety of ludicrous weapons – is going online, offering you the chance to take on worms from all over the world. There'll also be downloadable content, and – we're promised – a proper single-player campaign to get your teeth into. Wait, do worms have teeth?

ETA July

The Optimist

Don't worry. Be happy



"There aren't enough World War 2 games!"

I see the newest *Call Of Duty* is based in the present, despite the fact that World War 2 is a setting that games have barely touched upon as yet. Three *Call Of Duty* games, a few *Medal Of Honors*, *Brothers In Arms*, *Pilot Down...* hardly any WW2 games at all, you'll agree. Fortunately, as the upcoming *Moh: Airborne* and *BIA: Hell's Highway* suggest, *CoD4* seems to be nothing but a mere aberration.

More war

But in case I'm wrong, I'll suggest other ways for developers to explore the World War 2 genre. How about *Dad's Army: The Game*, a kids' platformer in the ilk of *Madagascar*, with each troop having different Hun-toppling abilities? Or a *Hitman*-type game where you sneak round the Third Reich HQ offing high-up Nazis? What about a title based on *The Great Escape*, where you play Steve McQueen and run over Nazis on your motorbike? Or, for sensitive types, maybe *Hello Kitty: Achtung Edition*, where Kitty tries to melt the evil Nazis' hearts with a sweet smile and a message of peace. Then rips their throats out with her claws. Suckers.

There's loads of mileage in WW2, so don't look for fresh ideas just yet, developers. But if you must, I don't think there are enough urban crime games around...

EMAIL PSM3 @
Are there too many war games these days?
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

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Cover Game

PS3

TRANSFORMERS SMASHES ONTO PS3!

Childhood-ruining cash-in, or a tie-in triumph? PSM3 primes for the hands-on truth...

Maybe you recreated the Cybertron civil war with plastic figures now stored in a dusty box in the attic, or followed the Autobots' journey from their home planet to Earth in the pages of Marvel's comic book series. Perhaps you shed a tear when Optimus Prime was gunned down in the animated movie or wondered why he'd turned into a monkey in the bewildering *Beast Wars*. Whatever the case - these are the Transformers and you all know them.

Movie quality

Even if you don't, you soon will, as this summer's huge movie remake, produced by Steven Spielberg, is set to saturate the media any day now. Ties between this and the film are close, with everything from the storyline to the sexy new character models shared between the two.

Spielberg, of course, all but invented the blockbuster and it was apparently the veteran helmer's advice that influenced the film's central relationship. Picking up a story thread from the '80s cartoon, the plot initially focuses on human teenager Sam and his friendship with the transformer Bumblebee. This relationship might go some way to explaining why, if you've seen any shots of the game so far,

they've almost certainly featured the chirpy yellow and black Autobot - he's been plastered all over fansites on the internet for weeks. He's also the character you play first in the game, and so it's with him that our hands-on session starts. We begin, an on-screen title says, in 'The Suburbs', a setting which taps into the Spielberg back-catalogue of middle-US fairytales and makes sense of Bumblebee's transition from the jaunty VW

"The movie and game share everything, from story to sexy new character models"

Transformers

"The new Bumblebee is a towering tangle of body plates and exposed gears."



Prime Suspect Redesigned for the film but still decorated with a combination of blue and red.

Beetle of the old TV cartoons to a slightly beat-up 1974 Chevrolet Camaro.

The first thing we notice is the stylish complexity of the new character design. All of the Transformers - Autobots and Decepticons - have been visually reconstructed from scratch for the film by Industrial Light and Magic, George Lucas' mammoth special effects workshop. The in-game incarnations are based on 3D animation models pulled directly from ILM's computers, slightly simplified but still displaying the more realistic, gears-and-all look that the film pioneers. So instead of the robust, boxy bot of old, the new Bumblebee is a towering tangle of dulled yellow body plates and exposed silver axles, with every piece of his Camaro frame - inside and out - accounted for in his standing form.

Free reign

Currently, this form is exploring a free-roaming suburbia, stomping down narrow roads past stores, police stations and high school football fields. While Activision is keen to stress that *Transformers* isn't an open-world game in the manner of *Grand Theft Auto*, you are free to wander until you begin a mission. Once you enter one

Cover Game



PS3



Con-artists Barricade demonstrates the destructive power of the Decepticons.

Obviously, all this firepower makes a mess. However, the game's environments are designed to be totally destructible. Everything around you can be broken. Trees, fences, cars, buses, buildings, streetlights – they all come to bits under fire. Some of the obliterated scenery can then be used to cause even

cracked slabs of concrete to flatten passing cars. Causing such carnage runs counter to the Autobot ethos of protecting the Earth, of course, and Optimus Prime comes over the radio to give you a bollocking if you step out of line (no such hand-slaps if you're playing as the Decepticons, mind – more on which later).

Fun as this mash-up is, it's not going a long way to dispelling those early comparisons to *Hulk: Ultimate Destruction*. But transforming into each characters other form adds a new dimension, and it's during the first story mission that the game's potential begins to take shape. Bumblebee must race to the dealership where Sam is going to buy his first car to make sure that he is that car and that his

of these – triggered by stepping into floating coloured spotlights, ironically much like GTAs – you're locked into playing it through.

Smash it up

Our first mission is a tutorial. It's simple stuff – smash up waves of attacking red drone bots – but it gives us a chance to get to grips with the combat. The moves themselves are basic – like, punch-and-kick basic – but their effect is devastating. Thundering strikes with giant metal arms sweep enemies aside like mechanical flies, and the heft of Bumblebee's kick – a full-on, back-tilting wallop – is so solid you can feel it. Each Transformer also has hi-tech projectile weapons, and we despatch a bunch of the drones using Bumblebee's shoulder missiles and hand-cannon.

“The moves are basic, but their effect is devastating”

Transformers timeline

A history of those robots in disguise..

1984



Hasbro – the company behind GI Joe – buys various toys from Japanese companies Takara and Diacore to sell in the US, inventing a back-story to tie them all together. This is the birth of Transformers.

This back-story forms the basis of an animated series, made by Sunbow Productions. Debuting with a mini-series called 'More Than Meets The Eye' a full season follows in September.



its run of Transformers comics, telling the story of how the Autobots and Decepticons landed on Earth. Originally scheduled for four issues, it eventually ran for 80 and was in publication until 1991.

1986

Marvel comics begins The cartoon spawns The Transformers: The Movie, in which Optimus Prime is killed by Megatron. A third season follows, and Prime gets himself resurrected in the end.



1987

This year saw the first of many Japanese-only Transformers cartoon series and toy-lines under the name of 'The Headmasters'. Following in one-year intervals were 'Super-God Masterforce', 'Victory' and 'Zone'.

1993

Marvel releases a five-issue Transformers tie-in as part of their ongoing GI Joe series, which leads to a 12-issue Transformers run. Called 'Transformers: Generation Two', the series inevitably gets supported the release of a new toy line.

1995

Hasbro releases the 'Beast Wars' line in which both Autobots and Decepticons transformed into animals. This spawned a CG series that ran for



OPTIMUS PRIMAL

1999

'Beast Wars' was followed up by a new series called 'Beast Machines'. Introducing a new species of Transformers called the Vehicons, the series lasted for two seasons, with Japan-exclusive spin-offs and offshoots.

Transformers

"Trees and lamp-posts can be picked up and swung like enormous baseball bats"



2002

Dreamwave begins an entirely new set of Transformers comics based on the premise that the Autobots defeated the Decepticons but are attacked on their way home to Cybertron. This lasted until 2005.



2004

Also this year, Hasbro and Takara co-produced a new 52-episode series and spin-off toy line called 'Transformers: Armada'. It had no direct ties to the Generation One universe, although it featured many of the same characters.

Hasbro and Takara release the sequel to 'Armada' - 'Transformers: Energon'. Again it takes the form of a 52-episode cartoon series and toy line, as well as having its own comic book run.

2005

The first Transformers game based on Transformers comes out on PS2, a decent third-person shooter. Based on the characters and storyline from 'Armada', it features mini-cons heavily.



IDW publishing resurrects the Generation One universe in a series of special edition comics written by long-time Transformers author Simon Furman.

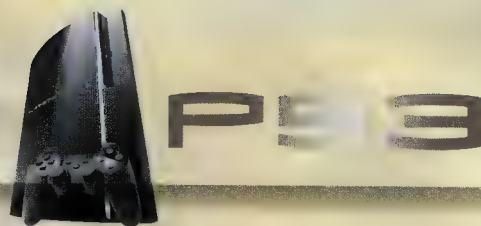
2007

Hasbro and Takara co-produce 'Transformers: Cybertron', a follow-up to 'Armada' and 'Energon'.

Dreamworks releases an updated, live-action Transformers movie, directed by Michael Bay and produced by Steven Spielberg with special effects by Industrial Light and Magic. It has no direct ties to any of the previous Transformers continuities.



Cover Game



Scream of the crop Starscream will be as treacherous as ever, constantly undermining Megatron.

plans aren't disrupted by the also en route Decepticons.

For the first time, then, we use Bumblebee's Camaro form. The transformation itself is perfect – the Autobot folds himself quickly and gracefully into vehicle mode, maintaining his forward momentum as arms and legs compact and close together, before revving up and powering away. The physics aren't finalised in this version of the game so we find ourselves sliding around the winding roads a bit, but the

mission still demonstrates what the game has the potential to achieve. *Transformers* isn't trying to be sharp or smart, edgy or particularly different. It's a tie-in to a thumping big blockbuster and it's striving to be the videogame equivalent – that is, rammed with ace locations, stunning characters and great action set pieces.

This is borne out by the decision to let gamers play as the Decepticon characters alongside their Autobot counterparts. We play through their attack on a US Army base located in a Middle Eastern desert, as briefly glimpsed in the movie trailer. The contrast with the Suburbs is striking – the desert is a hazy expanse of dusky dunes under a blue sky, littered with tents, radar towers and hangars. Playing as the Decepticon footsoldier/helicopter Blackout, these are our target. Untransformed, Blackout's main weapon is his rotor blades, which double as deadly samurai swords. We have more joy leaping into the air and taking chopper form,

though, laying down tracer fire while strafing over rows of shelters.

When the camp's a smouldering pile of torn canvas, it's time to deploy Scorponok. Redesigned for the film as a non-transforming sub-character who detaches from Blackout (think Soundwave's cassette tapes), Scorponok's almost insectoid metallic-blue-on-yellow body is further proof that the redesigned look of the *Transformers* is something special. Although he can't transform, he can burrow, diving under the sand to travel at greater speeds than on the surface, and we tear between army camps destroying a batch of radar emplacements.

Prime mover

While this is where our hands-on experience ends, it's clear that *Transformers* is building into a summer spectacular in its own right. Both Optimus Prime and Megatron will be among a total of nine playable characters (see boxout for

“Gamers can play as the Decepticons as well as the Autobots”



Tech Mechs The designs for the bots were created with realistic engineering in mind and so are technically complex and complete.



Transformers

"It's clear that Transformers is building into a summer spectacular in its own right"



Ready to Bumble Bumblebee becomes friends with the main human hero in the film Sam Witwicky.

details) and – just like the film – the game is likely to culminate in a one-on-one showdown between the old foes. Also being hinted at are the number of unlockable features and alternate modes being built into the game – there's no official word as yet, but producer Callum Godfrey is a apparently a massive fan of the '80s toys and cartoon, so old-school character designs and locations are more than a simple possibility. We're definitely keen to play more.

PSM3 Reckons

Transformers isn't aiming for a revolution, it's aiming to be fun. It's simple and accessible, and plays to the strengths of its subject matter by cramming in as many Autobots and Decepticons as possible. If it gets it right, it'll be exciting, explosive summer blow-out that the movie can be proud of. If it gets it wrong, all of our of our precious childhood memories will be tainted, and so might yours be. High stakes, then, but what we've played so far was quite impressive.

Hopefully we're not going to be disappointed.



Prime is money You can use projectile attacks to repel enemies or pick up bits of the scenery to wield as weapons.



Artificial Intelligence When dealing with smaller bots Optimus Prime can use punch and kick combos to smash them to pieces.



Autobots Vs Decepticons

We take a closer look at all the playable Transformers characters

Autobots

Optimus Prime

The Autobots' valiant leader and the most recognisable of all the Transformers. Optimus - once again voiced by fan favourite Peter Cullen - still wears his trademark red and blue colours, but updated with a snazzy flame effect. Trendy.



Bumblebee

Crucial to the plot of both the film and the game, Bumblebee was always the Transformer who understood humans the best. Updated from a VW Beetle to a Chevy Camaro, Bumblebee's voice is damaged and he communicates by playing songs on his in-car stereo.



Ironhide

A veteran Autobot warrior and - in the cartoon - Optimus Prime's bodyguard. In the new story he's presented as Prime's oldest friend and the Autobots' weapons specialist, transforming into the heavy duty GMC Topkick C4500 pick-up truck.



Jazz

Jazz is the coolest and most stylish of the Autobots. His vehicle mode in the original cartoons was a sleek

Porsche, and he had a set of reflective shades built into his robot features. He appears in the new Transformers as a Pontiac Solstice.





Toy photography kindly reproduced courtesy of www.seibertron.com

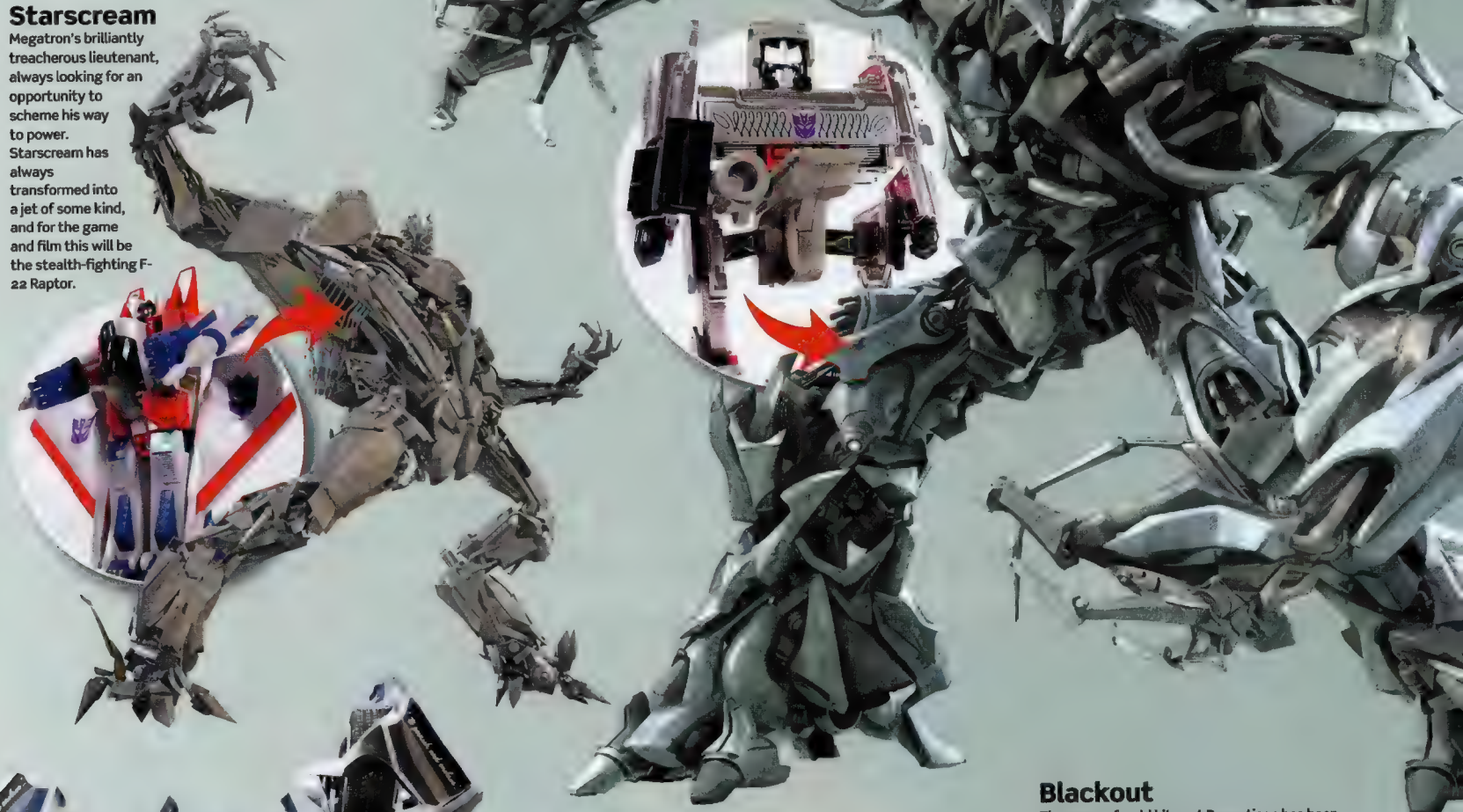
Decepticons

Megatron

The Decepticon leader and Prime's nemesis. In the film he's voiced by Hugo Weaving, but the game sees the return of Frank Welker, who played Megatron in the original cartoons. Ditching the idea of a size-shifting gun, Megatron now transforms into an unconfirmed flying craft (rumour suggests a stealth bomber or alien vehicle).

Starscream

Megatron's brilliantly treacherous lieutenant, always looking for an opportunity to scheme his way to power. Starscream has always transformed into a jet of some kind, and for the game and film this will be the stealth-fighting F-22 Raptor.



Blackout

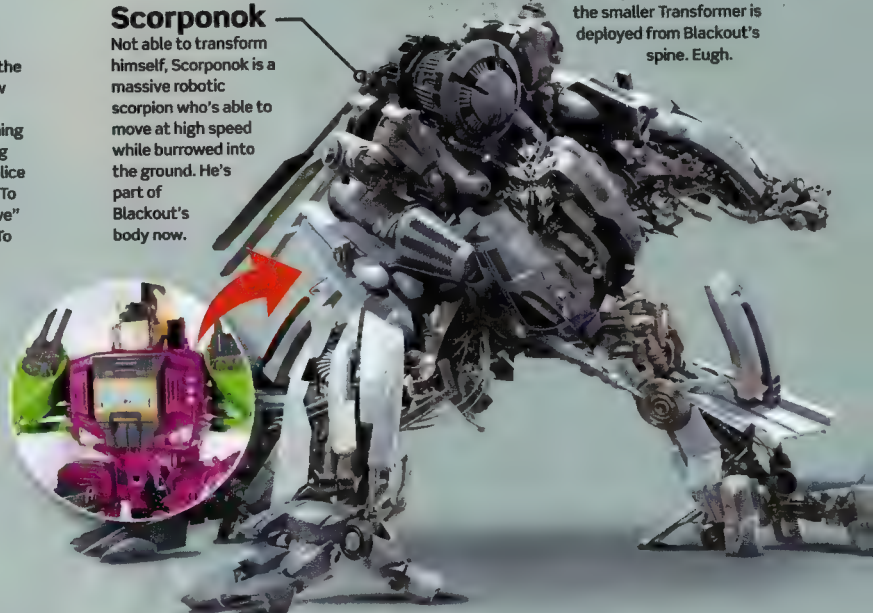
The name of a old bit-part Decepticon has been given to this reinvented character, who transforms into an MH-53 Pave Low transport helicopter. Blackout also incorporates Scorponok into his body – the smaller Transformer is deployed from Blackout's spine. Eugh.

Barricade

Originally appearing as a Formula One race car in the cartoon series, the new Barricade is very different, transforming into a Ford Mustang disguised as a police car (instead of "To protect and serve" his wing reads "To punish and enslave").

Scorponok

Not able to transform himself, Scorponok is a massive robotic scorpion who's able to move at high speed while burrowed into the ground. He's part of Blackout's body now.





PSM3 talks with Optimus Prime

The voice of Optimus talks about his work on the game...

To the sound of fanboys rejoicing everywhere, it was recently announced that Peter Cullen - the voice of Optimus Prime in the '80s cartoon and animated movie - was to reprise his role in the new Transformers game and film. We spoke to the big man about the fans, Megatron and what it's like to work on a PS3 game...

PSM3: Has anyone ever recognised you as Optimus Prime?

Peter Cullen: Not really. But if somebody knows that I was Optimus Prime - if someone had told them, in the vicinity - there would always be this shocked kind of look on their face and they'll insist "Are you really Optimus Prime?" and I'll say [adopts freakishly convincing young boy's voice] "Yeah! Yeah I am, I talk like this!" And they'll say "Aw, you're not Optimus" and then I'll say [adopts perfect Prime voice] "Autobots! Transform!" and they'll go from incredulity to absolute shock.

kid's gotta have a hero, and I was one of those kids. I just look at Mel Blanc as a genius. And I can say the same thing about Frank Welker, who played Megatron. Frank is alive and well, and we don't get together very often but when we do it's just an honour to be with him.

PSM3: Do all the actors record in the same place?

PC: When we were doing the series we were all together, all those that were in the script. We worked in the same room, with the director, writer and producer behind a glass screen. For the movie and the game, I was isolated just doing my bits. The game is co-active with the player, and I would play to what I imagined was a one-on-one with the game player. But I did not have an opportunity to work with any other actors.

PSM3: How much dialogue did you provide for the game?

Peter Cullen CV

As well as Optimus Prime, Peter has provided voices in loads of shows and movies, including...

- Winnie The Pooh
- The Smurfs
- Hagar The Horrible
- Duck Tales
- Ghostbusters (the animated spin-off series from the movie)
- Rambo (spin-off series, like Ghostbusters)
- Dungeons & Dragons
- GI Joe
- The Jetsons

PC: Oh, a whole bunch. It was many, many recording sessions and several hours. It was very extensive, there's not a stone unturned. It's quite fascinating - the more I got into it the more I realised, you know, this is a gonna be a great opportunity for a kid to relive and climb into that imaginary world.

PSM3: Was working on the game very different from the cartoon, apart from the fact you were alone?

PC: I don't think so, no. I had a director on every occasion, and there's a lot of interpretation to be done - there are different ways to read lines. You have to cover every base, so they can have choices when they're putting it together.

PSM3: Do you generally work from a script, or are there opportunities to ad lib?

PC: There are very few opportunities for ad-libbing with the game because it's very technically involved. And to be honest with you, in the cartoon series, I'm sure that ad-libs were included but the opportunities were much more evident. You could stray away from the script, but very, very little, because the animations were pre-conceived and it gets very expensive!

PSM3: Last question - what would Optimus Prime's favourite game be?

PC: I would have to say Activision's Transformers! Is there anything else out there?

"I have apprehension about being confused with Optimus"

PSM3: Do you mind doing your voices in public like that?

PC: I have some apprehension about having a kid listen to the cartoon and then confuse it with me so sometimes I'm a little reluctant, but of course I'll do them on request.

PSM3: You do other characters like Eeyore from Winnie the Pooh too. Which is more challenging, Eeyore or Optimus?

PC: Oh, Optimus. I like to have the less challenging roles on occasion, but I love the challenge with Optimus. Eeyore isn't a challenge, he's just a total sadsack. A lovable sadsack, though.

PSM3: What voice-over artists do you most admire?

PC: Mel Blanc and Frank Welker, to mention two. Mel Blanc [voice of Bugs Bunny] of course you know - a



FRANK WELKER

The original voice of Megatron in the cartoon, and now the game.

PETER CULLEN

Optimus Peter Here's the man who plays the voice of the universe's most recognisable mech, Optimus Prime.

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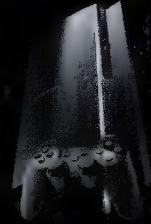
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Previews



PS3

Pub Sony | Dev Insomniac Games
Players 1 | Genre Sci-fi shooter
FYI Ratchet, PS3 and disco collide

ON THE DISC

See Ratchet in action
on next month's disc

**“They’ve
created
weaponry
not possible
on PS2”**



Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction

Text up and set a course for a galaxy of fun Jon Hamblin

QUOTE

Developer insight

"The animators were really getting into creating the dance moves for the Groovitron gun – there's a video floating round the office of some of them acting out the moves. There's a lot of pelvic thrusting. It's terrifying."



Ryan Schneider
Marketing Director

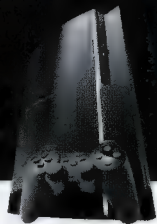
Since their adventures in the Shadow Sector in *Gladiator*, our heroes have been enjoying some well deserved R&R. Ratchet has been pondering his origins, and his lonely life as the only known Lombax in the universe. Enter Emperor Tachyon, leader of a race of hideous insect-like creatures. He's been obsessed with wiping out the Lombax for centuries and now he's come for everyone's favourite kitten of mass destruction. The Emperor attacks in the opening moments of the game, resulting in a spectacularly explosive introductory level that leaves our heroes stranded in the far-off galaxy of Polaris.

One of the things we learned from *Resistance: Fall of Man* was that it's really important to start your game off with a bang." Ryan Schneider is the marketing

director at Insomniac Games, the guys behind the *Ratchet & Clank* series. Ryan's just finished revealing the latest version of the popular franchise (six games in five years, if you count the US-exclusive cell phone version, *Going Mobile*) at Sony's Gamer's Day event in San Diego, and he's clearly excited about getting to show off the game to an audience for the first time. "The live demo went unbelievably well, didn't it? We were really apprehensive about showing it because, apart from the trailer, we hadn't shown any raw gameplay yet."

Over the rainbow

Seeing the game in action, it's easy to see why it's so popular. It's a really fun, very reason that *Resistance* was so relentlessly brown was because



Going solo

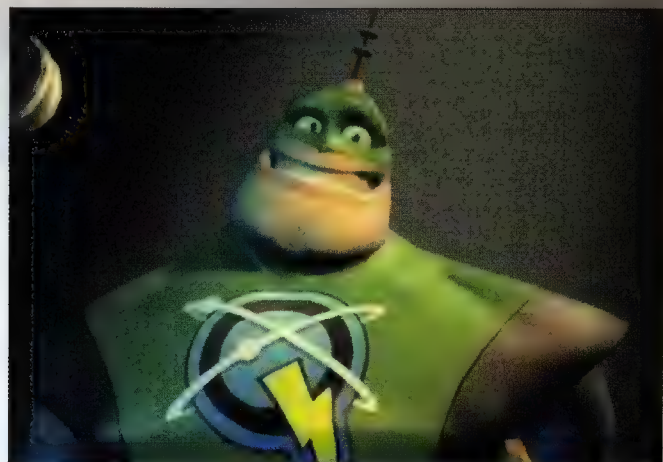
Fans of the series may be surprised to learn that there's no multi-player component to *Tools Of Destruction*. "When you have to create maps and co-op modes and game types, it takes a lot of resources away from creating a really good single player game," says Marketing Director Ryan Schneider. "We found that the majority of *Ratchet* fans enjoyed the games for the single player story, so that's where we've concentrated our efforts. Which doesn't mean that there won't be *Ratchet & Clank* multi-player in the future."



FRIEND OR FOE?

Jumping the Qwark

A familiar face returns...



Captain's fable Anyone one hoping to see a return of the side-scrolling Captain Qwark platforming levels of *Ratchet & Clank 3* – one of the best extras in any game ever – will be disappointed because they won't be making a return this time out. Qwark himself will play a role in the story however – he's helping evil Emperor Tachyon, though rumours persist that he may be acting as a spy for our heroes. You can see him on the trailer (see next month's disc) making jokes about our heroes' new next-gen looks.

Insomniac were saving all their colours for *Ratchet & Clank* – the rainbow palette looks like the result of an explosion in an Play-Doh factory. While instantly recognisable as a *Ratchet & Clank* title, the jump from PS2 to PS3 has caused the needle on our pretty-o-meter to wang off the end of the scale. The alien worlds have always been imaginative, but never have they looked so alive – everything bursting with ambient detail. Trees gently sway, fireflies dart around, hundreds of hover cars clog the air and huge gears and wheels churn and turn constantly. But despite all this, the frame rate is smooth like peanut butter. For all the focus on *Ratchet*'s imaginative arsenal, it's easy to forget how solid the underlying technology is too.

"We consider *Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction* to be the first second-generation PlayStation 3 title," says Ryan with no small amount of pride. "We think that we've finally managed to create a world as detailed as something you might read in a book or see in a movie. If *Resistance* was our Bruckheimer movie, this is our Pixar flick."





DANCE OFF

Disco Inferno

How the groovitron works:



Dance dance revolution Find a clump of nasty-looking villains who look in need of a boogie and ready your weapon. Aim carefully – you only get one shot.



Boogie nights Woah! Coloured lights shoot out from the silver disco ball – baddies just can't resist throwing some shapes. Come on, everyone – get down.



The last dance ...Which gives you plenty of time to run in and batter the piss out of them, in a terrifying recreation of a provincial nightclub after one in the morning.

stood on and combined to form larger cubes. Or there's the Visicopter, a sort of portable RC helicopter drone weapon that's controlled with the Sixaxis when launched. You can use it to scout the route ahead, or as a remote controlled bomb – perfect for taking out large clumps of enemies in one go. The Sixaxis is also used for the Tornado gun, which fires a portable tornado that whirls around the room and sucks up everything in its path, before dumping it all in a tangled mess of bolts, debris, and dizzy looking villains. Very smart.

Back to basics

But Ryan is keen to stress that the most significant change is the return to the series' adventuring roots.

"Over the course of the PlayStation 2 games, we went down a path that started to prize the weaponry over the storyline. One of the key pillars of *Ratchet & Clank* is a mystery adventure. We want players to explore this universe and get wrapped up in the tale that we're trying to tell. It's a good story too – while Ratchet is slowly discovering details about the origin of his race, Clank is discovering spirituality – though more than that I really can't say at this point."

As well as getting to see next-generation versions of a couple of the planets from previous *Ratchet* adventures, we can expect to see some cool new rocks too. The demo that was shown at Gamer's Day focused on Kerchew City, a place so toxic its inhabitants are constantly



Cell factor Looks like a cartoon, yeah? Now imagine it moving in real-time...

sneezing. We also got to take a look at the planet of Kobalia, which is full of wild beasts, enormous sea monsters and giant centipedes. It's absolutely overflowing with life and it shows off the incredible visuals of the game beautifully.

Cower, infidels!

It's clear that the yearly EA-style updates of the series have quietly garnered it a solid following, and that *Ratchet & Clank* PS3 will keep the faithful happy. But Schneider is certain that the PlayStation 3 incarnation will impress a lot more people besides just the already converted. "Sceptics who saw the trailer we put out last year were thinking 'Is that really gameplay? Can they really put all this stuff on screen?' and I think that with this presentation we've demonstrated that we really can." And, you know, we think they might be right.



PSM3 Reckons

Not to sound gung-ho, but judging by what we've seen so far, *Tools Of Destruction* is a potential Game Of The Year. Can't wait.



But the raw grunt of PS3 is doing far more than just filling the screen with pretty colours and background fudge. As soon as the weapons come out, you can immediately see how Insomniac have managed to use the power to create weaponry that just wouldn't have been possible previously. Take the Groovitron, for example – one blast sends a silver disco ball into the air, causing all nearby baddies to down tools and get funky with their bad selves. "Every single enemy type has their own unique set of dance moves," says Ryan. "There's absolutely no way we could have had the memory resources for that on PlayStation 2." You also have the Gelinator, powered by Gelitonium, a weapon that fires cubes of wibbly-wobbly jelly that can be



Beautiful Katamari

The balls roll onto PlayStation 3 **David Cook**

1 What's new?

Generally, we moan when games stay the same, and the simple fact is that – undisclosed online multi-player mode aside – there's little changed in this latest *Katamari*. But when you're a series that plays like nothing else, with the charm of a basket of puppies in pink ribbons, you can just about get away with it.

Confused? It's all about rolling up the world into giant balls.



“Will Sixaxis control let you push the ball with sweeps of the pad?”

3 Pad pushers

An obvious thing for Beautiful Katamari to implement would be Sixaxis control, so you can push your ball about with swishes of the pad. Whether this would make the game too simple – Katamari's dual-stick controls weren't easy to master – remains to be seen, however.

4 As big as the universe

You've got to roll up your balls to the size the King requests. This might be a couple of millimetres to twelve billion feet wide. Ish. We're promised bigger levels than before, but we hope this doesn't just mean the interesting bits will be more spread out. Judging by the screen below, you'll be rolling up an entire world, clouds and everything, this time out.

2 Roll up, roll up

The game works in the same way as ever. You, as The Prince or one of his 50 cousins, roll up various items – from household goods to zoo animals to mountains – at the behest of the slightly mental King Of All Cosmos.



PSM3 Reckons

Katamari will probably be as fun as ever, although we hardly imagine it's going to stretch PS3's powers. We're still sort-of excited, though.





Meet the new boss Dr Daniel Lamb soon gets the hang of this killing business.



Manhunt 2

Hands-on verdict: Solid, but lacking the XXX-factor... Jon Hamblin

Given the original *Manhunt*'s self-contained storyline and grizzly conclusion – with maniac director Starkweather meeting his maker on the end of your whirring chainsaw – it's no surprise that *Manhunt 2* is a sequel in name and gameplay mechanics only.

Rockstar have gone for a sort of Hammer Horror-wood chase thriller theme this time out, a grue-spattered, X-rated Fugitive riff starring Dr Daniel Lamb, a scientist on the run from a shadowy organisation called the Pickman Project.

You're not being paranoid...

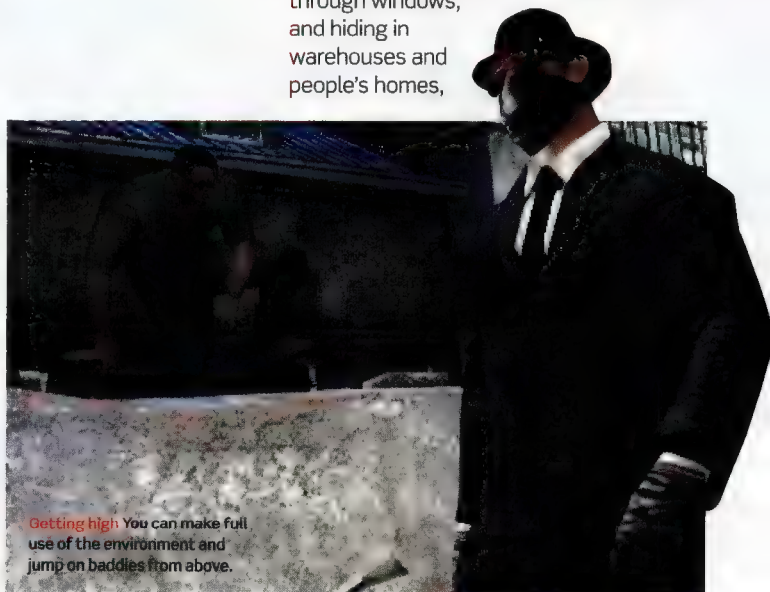
The game's opening level sees you escaping from a nut-house, and from the off, the trademark humour is very much in evidence – the first thing that happens once you gain control is a fellow inmate urinating on you through his cell bars. Creeping through the institution as lightning cracks all around will feel instantly familiar to *Manhunt* veterans. The first kill, a hypodermic needle to the throat of an

orderly, results in Daniel hurling his guts up on to the floor in revulsion, though the sense of remorse only lasts as long as it takes for you to push the left stick forward into the next room, from which point Dr Dan happily goes on a killing spree that'd shame Freddy Krueger.

After cutting a swathe through a hospital's worth of psychos, orderlies and psycho orderlies, Lamb makes his escape in the time-honoured asylum getaway vehicle – the back of a garbage truck. Why was it collecting trash in the middle of the night? We'll never know.

Rockstar have clearly been thinking about the game's tempo – while the original was largely cat and mouse, with you playing Mr Squeaky, *Manhunt 2* has peaks and troughs, with plenty of fast-paced action sequences breaking up the stalking. In the level 'Most Wanted', you're fleeing from the police, the army and the Bloodhound gang. Daniel is far more agile than James Earl Cash was, and he can clamber up, over and under objects with

ease. As helicopter searchlights attempt to pick you out, you sprint through suburban streets, leaping fences, crashing through windows, and hiding in warehouses and people's homes,



Getting high You can make full use of the environment and jump on baddies from above.

MOVIE HUNT TIMELINE

The cultural boiling pot of *Manhunt 2* is filled with juicy ingredients

The Fly
Scientist tries out experiment on himself to disastrous effect. Still good now.

1958



Tenebre
Nasty Italian stalker thriller that features gory *Manhunt*-style executions.

1983



The Fugitive
Harrison Ford on the run from Tommy Lee Jones. Well, we've all been there.

1993



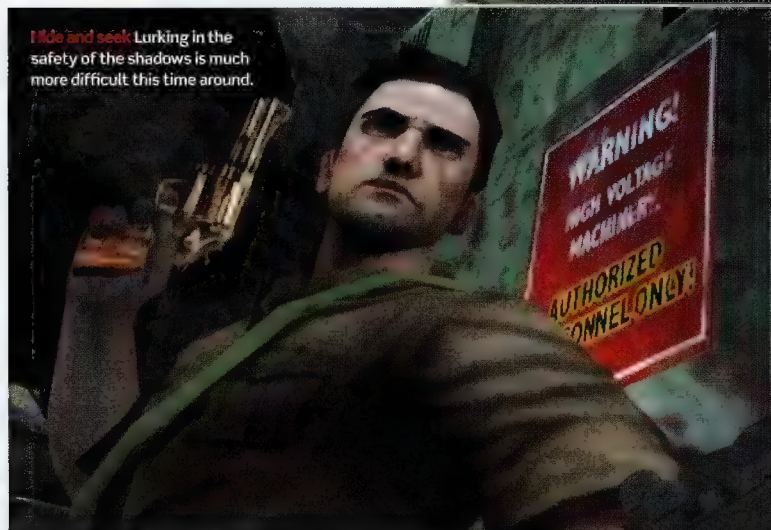
Paycheck
Amnesiac Ben Affleck leaves clues for himself to figure out a conspiracy. Bad.

2003



Oldboy
Imprisoned for 15 years, Oh Dae-Su goes on a violent rampage. As would we...

2004



before ending up in a series of storm drains, where the Bloodhounds doggedly hunt you down.

Hiding in the shadows is far harder than it was before. We got a shock when metaphorically flicking the Vs at a pursuer from within a patch of darkness – he suddenly flicked on a torch, saw us, and beat the crap out of us. Even without torches they can peer into the gloom, inciting a detection-avoiding, button-prompt mini-game to regulate your breathing. On the plus side, you can now smash lights to create shadows, giving you far more control over your environment.

Gun in 60 seconds

Some people thought that shooters came into the original *Manhunt* way too late in the game. You'll see 'em much earlier this time, though ammo is scarce enough that you'll still have to rely mainly on plucky bags and shards of glass for your kills. Guns can now be used for executions, leading to some stunningly grisly deaths involving gun barrels in mouths. Even without activating an execution move, a decent head-shot will bust a man's skull open like a melon.

Also new are *Punisher*-style environmental kills. Occasionally, you'll see a skull on your radar. Sneak up on a baddie loitering near one and hit **Ⓢ**, and you'll be 'treated' to a grisly, one-off death animation, ranging from drowning in oil barrels to industrial machinery 'accidents'.

Our favourite was the old 'body-in-the-trash-compactor' routine, resulting in a cube with a human arm poking out – a brilliant moment of Tex Avery nonsense to break up the game's generally oppressive tone. Height kills are also possible, allowing you to leap down on baddies from above.

Moanhunt

While undoubtedly as dark and violent as its predecessor, we can't but help feel things are a little more straightforward this time. The original didn't *demand* a sequel, and, either way, we'd rather have seen it on PS3 – though the censors may disagree. It still plays great, but losing the 'John Carpenter does *Running Man*' vibe has significantly reduced the sleazy, seedy feel the first game had.

Particularly disappointing is the lack of a director urging you on via your headset, especially for those of us who enjoyed having Cox in our ears. But levels set in brothels and gangs of KKK-style hooded villains should up the shock factor significantly when we review the finished game in late July.

**PSM3 Reckons**

The horror bits play second fiddle to the combat, but you'll never tire of slaughtering soldiers in a flurry of slow-mo martial arts and gunplay.





Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

On a quest to discover PS3's potential **Dave Harrison**

QUOTE

Developer insight

"We wanted to stick with what we know and what we love, and that's third person action-adventure games that are story-driven and, most importantly, we wanted to create the ultimate action-adventure experience."



Evan Wells
President, Naughty Dog

Uncharted: Drake's Fortune first appeared last year as a stunning nameless demo, but lacked any real direction. However, during the last year or so it has gained shape, a name and a reputation as one of the most promising PS3 exclusives to date.

Developed by Jak & Daxter creators Naughty Dog, Drake's Fortune is a broad adventure that attempts to wrestle the responsibility for searching for lost treasure in exotic places away from Lara Croft and the fairer sex. The man in question is square-jawed, neat-haired Nathan Drake - a stylish Gap jeans-wearing, modern day Indiana Jones who sets out to find the fortune of some lost Eldorado gold. It's of particular interest to Nathan, however, as he believes that the booty once belonged to his ancestor, Sir Francis Drake.

Naughty Dog haven't let the fact that Drake died childless from dysentery in 1596 get in the way of a good yarn, so have conjured up the idea that the Elizabethan sea captain faked his death in order to keep the precious treasures for himself. He hid most of it on a small Pacific

island which is where we find Nathan battling pirates and smugglers to find it.

The way you move

It seems like a cliché heavy set-up, but this isn't just a tired Tomb Raider clone - this is a game designed to prove that PS3 can deliver experiences other consoles can't. We've seen Nathan shooting off locks to open gates, pushing boulders over cliffs and - with a well aimed shot - flipping an enemy's truck down a mountain in a fizz of explosions. Nice. Thousands of animations have been created so Nathan doesn't have to rely on the same rigid movements to deal with different situations, while every aspect of the environment has been built from scratch. It means - in theory - you won't come across the same tree twice. Combat-wise there's nothing groundbreaking, but Nathan will duck while running if he's under fire, and spends a lot of time peeking from cover to blast the pirates that give chase, shouting thing like "He's over there - GET HIM."

Without doing anything spectacular, Drake's Fortune already looks great and we can't wait to see more.

Cover star

Using the environment to gain the upper hand

Ducking

Initially, using cover works as it does in many other action games. Nathan can back up against a wall, or crouch behind a boulder then pop up to release shots, taking aim with precision timing.



Wild, wild vest Some enemies will only know you're there when you start shooting.

Stealth

Nathan can remain undetected if he hides behind objects. Just like real life. The only time a stalking enemy will ever know he's there is if he rings off a few shots in their direction. So as long as he stays as quiet as a mouse, there's no need to enter a battle.

Rolling

Nathan can spring out from and roll between cover, all in one fluid motion, which means he can avoid being outflanked and reposition himself to get an angle on harder to hit targets.

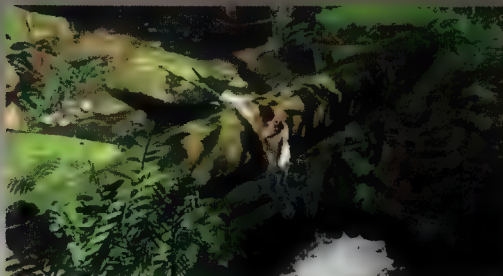
Use the scenery for protection and





Solid Drake

Uncharted's pillars of action



Climbing Nathan can really scramble across the environment well. Context animations mean he'll step onto waist-height objects, and if he falls off a log he'll cling on like a monkey.



Gunplay While running for cover, Nathan can reel off shots from a number of weapons. So far we've seen pistols, AK-47 rifles and a nice little shotgun. There are also grenades.



Fighting Getting up-close and personal and hitting @ will launch Nathan into fighting mode. He's pretty handy and can deliver drop-kicks, hefty uppercuts and the occasional neck-break.

Uncharted territory

The game's stunning photo-realistic look comes from a combo of carefully-constructed animations and painstaking attention to detail in the level design - a combination that's made possible with the power of the PS3.

Express yourself

A lot of time has been invested in the facial expressions of the characters in order to avoid the blank mugs that were a feature of PS2 games. In *Uncharted*, every facial movement generated will be relevant to the situation that the character is in. Expect plenty of sweaty grimaces.

Pain, happiness, loss, exertion, agony



Between a rock and a hard place

For an environment to really come to life, it has to be lit well, so real-time lighting has been used and attention given to how light interacts with objects - reflecting off solid surfaces or shining around and through leaves.



Capitains log Expect Naughty Dog to make uses of the Sins for balancing

jungle | pirates | gold | subs | AK-47s



Root Cause They've created a lush and incredibly detailed jungle environment.

Groundbreaking and building

Every part of the background has been built individually so you don't feel as though you're walking past the same flat textures all the time. You can climb the rich foliage to reach higher ground, like above.

Move it

Thousands of unique animations are being created, so every jump, crouch and scramble as you navigate around this huge jungle playground will feel fluid. Sweet.

Water way to go

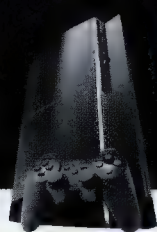
Naughty Dog have created a complex water simulation for the game, which can be best seen in a section where Drake explores a stranded Nazi U-boat, bizarrely stuck atop a waterfall. The waves lap against the rusted corridor walls, and splashes and ripples according to his movements.



PSM3 Reckons

Drake's could be a classic. It's frantic action bits look nothing short of brilliant and the platforming seems pretty great too. Watch this one.





Ninja Gaiden Sigma

Why this is much more than just another hack-and-slasher... **Andy Kelly**

Lush 1080p visuals aside, there's nothing new here. It's a third-person action game with fixed cameras, environmental puzzles and fighting in between. Think *Onimusha*, *Genji* or *Resident Evil*. But what makes *Ninja Gaiden* interesting is how polished it is. Specifically the fighting which is taut, slick and muscular; the kind of thing you'd expect to see in a beat-'em-up. This is thanks to the involvement of eccentric lead designer Tomonobu Itagaki, the man behind the notoriously fast-paced and complex *Dead Or Alive* series. Hero Ryu Hayabusa has a wealth of moves at his disposal and learning to use all of them is an epic undertaking, even for experienced gamers.

The game, originally released on Xbox, is famed for its harsh difficulty curve. It

demands intense concentration and the sharp reflexes of an *actual* ninja. Fights with regular enemies can be as hard as boss battles, and that's only on 'normal'. It is, however, never unfair. The engine is so robust that if you die, it's entirely you and your reactions' fault. Well, sometimes it's the camera's. It's not perfect – as our hands-on experience attests – and you'll find yourself fighting off-screen for more than a few seconds, which is disorientating and an annoyance. But it's a rare occurrence. This game is *tight*.

Rottweiler or poodle?

But if it gets too tough, there's 'Ninja Dog' mode. Die three times in the first level and you're granted the embarrassment of having the difficulty level reduced, as a

pretty ninja lady tells you she's disappointed in you. It will be a lot easier, mind. But here's our suggestion; don't. The difficulty is one of the game's best bits –



Destroy beauty It looks amazing, and there are loads of baddies to murder to bits.



The art of the combo

We don't claim to be masters of *Gaiden*'s combo system. There are probably only about six people in the world who've fully mastered it. But here's a quick look at just one way Ryu can take out groups of enemies by combining moves. This is from early on in the game with only a partially-filled set of moves, so bear in mind that things get a lot more complex in later levels.



Step one Use an enemy's shoulders to jump behind them...



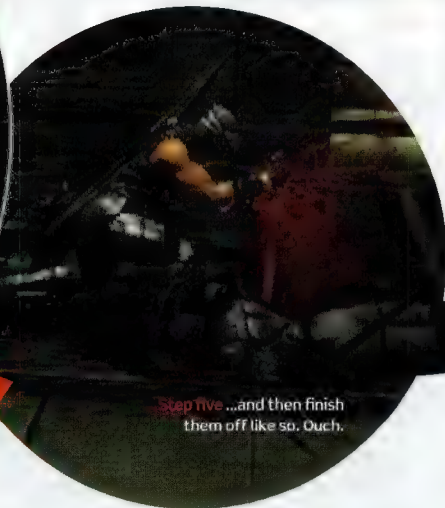
Step two ...then perform a charging Flying Swallow slash. They won't know what hit them.



Step 3 Unleash a flurry of slashes with the fabled Dragon Sword.



Step four Time for some Ninpo magic. This fire will juggle enemies in the air...



Step five ...and then finish them off like so. Ouch.

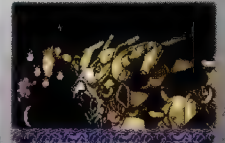
EVOLUTION

History of Gaiden



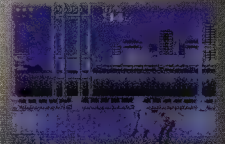
Ninja Gaiden

NES 1989
Ryu goes to America to avenge his father's death. A pretty basic platformer.



Ninja Gaiden II

NES 1990
Much the same, but with an 'improved' plot. Read: more corny dialogue.



Ninja Gaiden III

NES 1991
Another platformer? Crikey, it took *Ninja Gaiden* a while to evolve...



Ninja Gaiden Black

Xbox 2002
But when it did, it was exceptional. The PS3 game is based on this.

it's the *point*, pretty much – so don't be a pansy.

But is it just an Xbox cast-off? Well, Team Ninja have completely overhauled the visuals and it looks incredible in HD. It's crisp, vibrant and colourful, compared to the grubbier Xbox original. They've also included four new levels, a dual katana weapon, a new character – Rachel, a demon hunter – and the ability to fight bosses during normal gameplay that were only available in the hardest difficulty on Xbox. So it's sufficiently different.

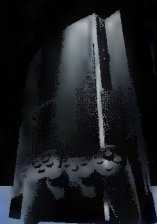
Ninja Gaiden isn't as accessible as, say, *Onimusha*. It's for people who'll appreciate the purity of the gameplay, have the endurance to scale its immense difficulty curve. If that's you, it might be time to start getting itchy in anticipation.



PSM3 Reckons

The hardened gamer's choice. You might be wary of how tough it is, but come release day this'll give your thumbs a powerful workout.





Fracture

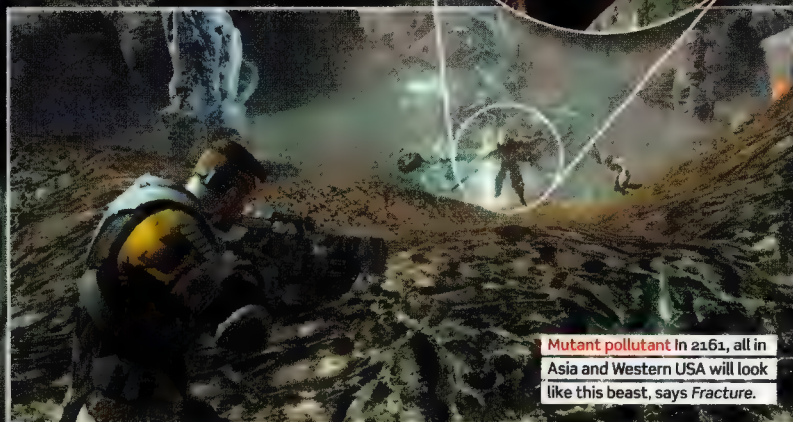
In this one, the earth will move quite literally **David Cook**

Shooters sometimes fall into the trap of concentrating purely on bigger and bigger guns, and ever more huge explosions, forgetting about the terrain in the process. That is, overlooking the tactical possibilities present in the environment. *Fracture*, however, is all about the terrain, offering the player the chance to shape, mould and simply obliterate it in all manner of ways.

Fracture is set in 2161. There's a war on. Now there's a surprise. It's Europe and Eastern USA vs Asia and Western USA, who, unsportingly, have created a load of genetic mutants to fight their battles. But Mason, on the East USA side and 'cybernetically enhanced', has a trick or two up his sleeve - and they're called 'tectonic' and 'subsonic' grenades. Subsonic grenades cause massive ditches

which magnetically attract enemies towards them, then blow up. Tectonic grenades, meanwhile, raise the ground in front of you, allowing you to reach higher places or simply create cover for yourself when you're exposed - but, remember, the enemy can use this cover as well, so think hard about where you're lobbing your bombs.

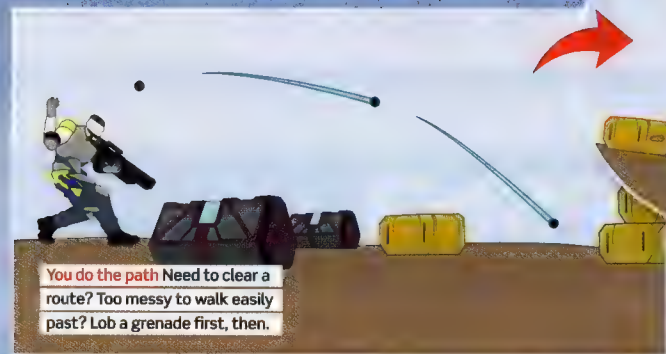
There are other weapons too - including a gun which sucks up huge chunks of earth, moulds it into a huge boulder and sends it rolling down slopes, crushing enemies like worms on its way - but the tactical possibilities of the grenades alone should ensure *Fracture* doesn't play quite like any other shooter.



Mutant pollutant In 2161, all in Asia and Western USA will look like this beast, says *Fracture*.

Hole lotta love

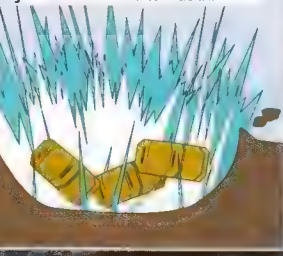
Subsonic grenades great big, sucking holes in the ground that baddies and scenery get drawn into, then blown up.



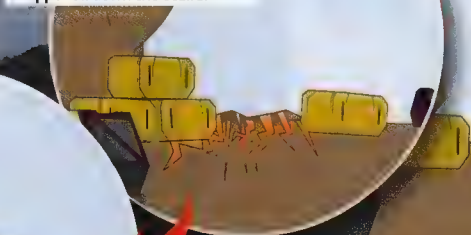
Going down The ground begins to cave in all around. Objects are drawn in slowly.



Bang, bang And then - boom. Everything gets exploderised, and you've a new hole to hide in.



Cracking up The ground starts to crack and the earth shakes as if a hippo fell down the stairs.



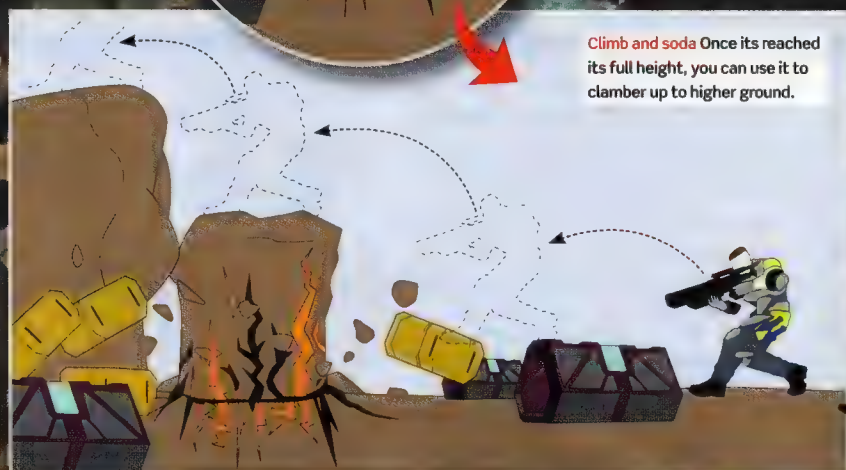
Rock solid After a few seconds, a huge pillar of rock springs up. It looks a bit phallic, to be honest.



Plain boring This patch of ground looks a bit dull. Let's do something more exciting with it.

Gin and tectonics

Potentially more interesting and exciting than the subsonics, tectonic grenades create giant towers and hills of rock from the ground. Lob one away, and stand back in awe as a giant pillar of earth erupts from the ground like a soily geyser. This allows you to create platforms leading to higher ground, create cover for Mason to hide behind or even topple mounted gun placements. There's a wealth of tactical uses for something like this, but if you can't be bothered with that, you can simply use the tectonics to lift enemies off the ground and send them flying through the air. Serves them right.



PSM3 Reckons

It's a good idea, certainly. We just hope the terrain-altering isn't just a mere gimmick. If it's not, then consider us officially intrigued.



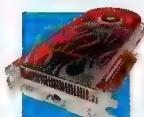
Your words, your pictures, your videos...

Your > < Space

► Start



50 Letters
Choice cuts from the PSM3 mail sack.



51 Text PSM3
Your texts exposed to the world.



52 Robo-Mind
You've finally overloaded him.



52 Poll Position
Vote – you'll see democracy in action.



53 MySpace
Our eight favourite readers this month.



54 Reader Reviews
Think we talk rubbish? You try it.



55 Right or Wrong?
Disagree with our scores? Say so.



55 YouTube
The best gamer videos out there.



Letters To PSM3

Your letters and emails, sifted and printed

Why Sonic deserves our respect...

In my opinion, Sonic the Hedgehog *rocks*. Some people at my school prefer guys like 50 Pence and some guy called 'Pee Diddy', but for me, it's Sonic all the way. I don't care that he has a three-inch nose and size 24 feet. It's Sonic! You gotta love Sonic. Right?

Also, he's 16 this year, so that's another tick on my 'Why I Like

"I can relate to Sonic in so many ways"

Sonic' list (a list that I made not three seconds ago). He's a teenager – I can relate to him in so many ways! He has the ability to run faster than a speeding cow, a girlfriend called Amy and a freakish sidekick called Miles 'Tails' Prower, who has two tails. I can relate to *all* of that. Except the girlfriend. Other reasons why Sonic the Hedgehog is TeH RoXoRr are that he has his own animé, a host of (mostly) brilliant games and a shitty comic book. Yay! I have



a lot more reasons why he's the best, but you'd probably hang yourself if I carried on. So I won't.
Nico King, email

Sonic used to be brilliant, but he's a relic of a bygone age. It's not his fault, of course – developers Sonic Team have struggled to turn the primarily linear 2D experience of old into free-roaming 3D, hence the downward spiral in quality. But even if they did make a brilliant Sonic game, he looks a little bit old-fashioned these days.

Animals with 'attitude' went out of style in 1998. Not that we're suggesting Sonic should be replaced by a gangster or a 'graff artist', but, well... maybe it's time for a new mascot. Just look at

how well *Shadow The Hedgehog* was received. Err...



The whole hog Sonic's first appearance was way back in 1991. The series has been hit and miss, but has definitely got worse of late.

Fantasy island

I know that *Final Fantasy* is a sweet series and that it's quite nice to come across something familiar in every game. Oh look, a Chocobo! It's someone called Cid! I'm casting Fire spells now, but in 30 hours' time I'll be able to cast Firaga! And so on.

All of this was evident when I got playing *Final Fantasy XII*, and although I was glad to see random battles go,

and welcomed being able to pass around weapons and armour to any of my characters, there are too many shortcomings. The Espers (à la FFXI) are absolutely bloody useless. They can be so tough to beat and earn them yourself, but for some reason mine cannot then defeat a pair of bats when I summon them. Two. Flipping. Bats.

Most non-city areas are samey, as though they've been made with the



Bird brain Sick of Chocobos? We're not.

PSM3 Wants You!

Post PSM3, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. Star letter wins the writer a game

Email PSM3@futurenet.co.uk

Text 87103 and start your message PSM3

MySpace & the PSM3 blog
Go to myspace.com/psm3 or check out psm3mag.com

Online Play the team at online games and win big

"You What?"

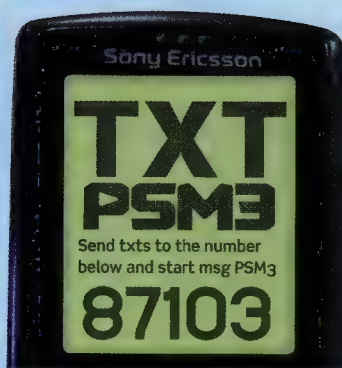
Thanks for writing. We Really

Guess what? After 79 hours I've finally mastered *Final Fantasy VII*. I've done everything you can possibly do

in the game – level 99 characters, every materia, weapon and armour – and I've finally managed to kill

the Emerald Weapon. Yaarrgh!
-Keyran-, MySpace
Wow, that's quite an achievement. Congrats.

I'm so annoyed at my parents. They won't let me get a PS3! I have the money to buy it but they think that



Cash flow

now that ps3 is out, how come it costs so much when the ps2 didn't? it's a rip off. **Anon**
Simple. PS2 had a DVD drive in it and two USB slots. PS3 has a Blu-ray drive and all manner of ports - USB, memory stick and so on - not to mention built-in online connectivity. It's loads of kit in a box, but at a really great price. So it's not a case of Sony being 'evil' and trying to steal our money. It's expensive because it's costlier to produce. Get it?

Card to beat

I've heard PS3 has a graphics card specially made by NVIDIA. Is this really true? And how powerful is it? **Steven Wishart**
Yes, it's true. It's called the RSX (Reality Synthesizer) and it's based on their G70 card. This card maximises per-pixel computation in favour of raw pixel output. Wahey!



Text us Send to 87103 and start your message with 'PSM3'

TimeSplitters 2 mapmaker. Music doesn't give the areas a particular sense of 'place' either, especially as it's often used in multiple areas. When you want to buy weapons or armour, you aren't informed of every bit of stat that the item can give you before you purchase, so you might get +2 Defence, but -1000 Speed, Vitality, or whatever, and have no idea until you've already bought it. The story just hasn't pulled me in one bit, there's a distinct lack of actual things happening and most of the big events are just told to you in text. Why? This is a videogame, not a book.

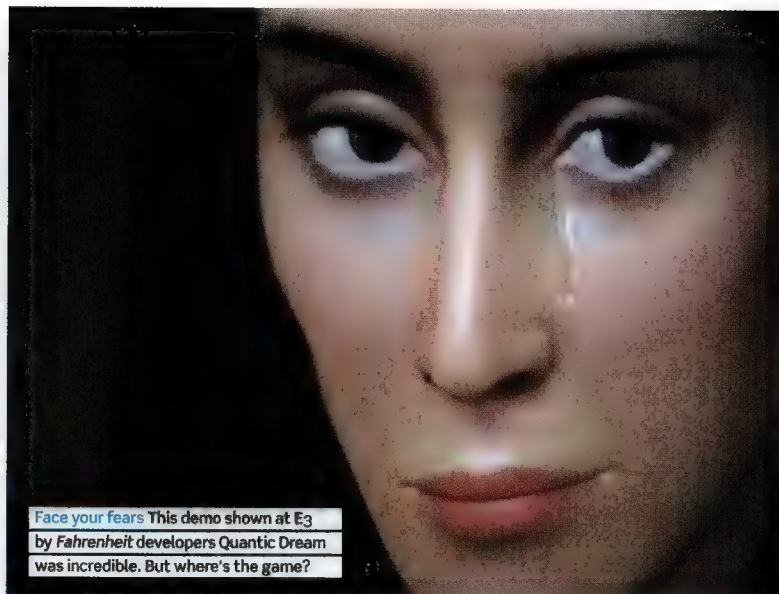
There's a name area mistake in the top-left corner of the world map, too. It makes me feel like whoever was making the game was perhaps preoccupied with, say, the next *Final Fantasy*. Am I the only one who's disappointed with *FFXII*?

Emily Knox, email

You're one of very few, Emily. In fact, some people - hardcore fans included - think *XII* is the best *Final Fantasy*

I'm obsessive when it comes to games. They think that if I get a PS3 then I won't do anything else, even

though I haven't played a game for a month. **Edward Harrison, email**
Odd. Doesn't sound like you're addicted to us...



Face your fears This demo shown at E3 by Fahrenheit developers Quantic Dream was incredible. But where's the game?

since VII. Some of the complaints you have with the game are justified, but when there's so much to do, see and savour, can you really complain? Well, maybe - but we're playing *Final Fantasy XII* to this day and love it to bits.

Talk to the hand

I've been wondering for quite a while about different ways to make playing games that little bit more interactive. The first thing that I thought about is quite simple: how about when we type our names into games, we hear them spoken out loud?

For example, *Virtua Tennis*. I've played it on PS2 and PSP and it really bugs me that the computer mentions your opponent's name but nothing is

said when you serve or take advantage. At the most, you might get called 'player one', but that's it. I really do believe that developers could make you feel that little bit more absorbed by adding this feature into their games. I was really hoping that with the power of PS3 this would be possible.

Alex Allen, email

Good idea, but one that's probably impossible to implement because the game would either have to come stocked with an enormous database of every name in the world read out by a voice actor, or they'd use one of those robot vocoder things. And that would be rubbish and stupid. Unless it was a game set in the future and the characters were all robots, that is.

Lost in transit

Can you shed any more light on a game called *Eight Days*? I saw amazing video footage of the game on your disc

Match point [insert your name here].
[Insert your name here] to serve.
Quiet, please.

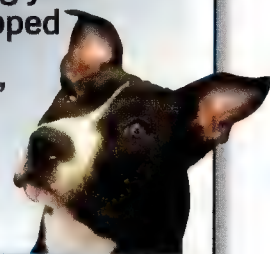


'Best' of the Blog

Visit **PSM3MAG.COM** and have your say

"Getting your balls ripped off by a pitbull."

Posted by:
-Blind Eskimo-



"Rugby on PS3 would be ace. Changing-room 'shenanigans' with the Sixaxis etc."

Posted by:
Cheese



'Best' of the Rest

Elsewhere, **Rorschach** talks mortality: "I want to die either as a very old man with my loved ones beside me, or at a relatively young age in a fit of fury, taking vengeance on all the chavs." Hmmm. Meanwhile, **Lewis-1996** bashes Harry Potter: "The films are OK but the books are CRAP!"

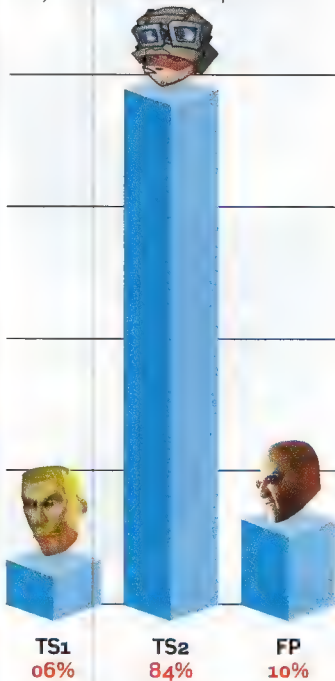


Today We post every day. Mostly. Go to **psm3mag.com** for more.

Poll Position

We ask. You answer

This Month Best TimeSplitters: TS1, TS2 or Future Perfect?



Next Month Best MGS: MGS, MGS2 or MGS3: Snake Eater?

MySpace Cast your vote by emailing psm3@futurenet.co.uk

and I've heard nothing about it since in the magazine. It looked really sharp, with gameplay seamlessly linking from video footage straight into and out of the game. Also, any news on *Heavy Rain*? That's vanished, too...

Stuart Neall, email

Well, *Heavy Rain* was just a tech demo showing off Quantic Dream's amazing facial animation. There's been no word on the actual game yet, if one exists. As for *Eight Days*, we don't know anything more. Since the E3 'trailer', the developers haven't released a single piece of info. Will it ever see the light of day? Our bet: not very likely.

EyeToy boy

I've read about the new EyeToy for the PS3. It looks good, it has great video quality and a smooth frame rate, but best of all it has... a microphone! Therefore, you can chat to people in games without a headset. Awesome.

But hang on, the current EyeToy can do this. It's just that nobody seems to have realised it yet. If, during a game of *MotorStorm* online, someone chirps up with "So, what headset is everyone using?" everybody, every single time this happens, is shocked when I confidently reply, "Oh, I'm using the EyeToy." If you're interested in experimenting with my claim, plug an EyeToy into the PS3, go to Settings> Accessory Settings> Audio Device

Settings> Input Device and change it to 'USB Camera'. Clever, huh?

David Callan, email

That is pretty damn clever. Well done for discovering it, and for revealing your secrets to PSM3. But even so, we still prefer the feel of a regular headset. Makes us feel like we're in a spaceship, or a tank or something.

Set up

Why don't you good folk at PSM3 make games yourselves? You're nearly always spot-on when it comes to flaws

and mistakes in a game. You understand when developers have a good idea for the basis of a game, but somewhere along the line they make basic, linear mistakes that you guys

Dear Robo-Mind

I just got a PS3 and found out about putting another operating system on it. You mentioned in an old magazine that you can put Linux on it, and I quite fancy doing that. But can it do any damage? And why are Sony so cool about it? Are you going to do a feature about any of this?

Mr Bone, email

"Hello... there. Ugh. I feel dreadful today... fzzzt... anyway, yes. You can put Linux [cough] on your PS3 (see PSM86), and we'll be telling you more in a future issue. Installing Linux lets you run all manner of programs, and even create your own games. Sony don't mind because you can't do anything with it that would directly damage them. Fzzzz... zzzssst..."

Dear Robo-Mind

Can you go back and change your PS Network online name? I rushed to get

mine when Sony announced you could, and in all the excitement I chose an absolutely rubbish one! I checked in my user settings but there's no option to change your name. It's so annoying!

Michael Eckersall, email

"...hissssssssss... ffrkk... ACK! [cough] Um, no. You can't change your username once you've registered. It's yours for life. Unless you sign up for another one. So your achievements and scores with your current name will be... [crackle] lost... forever... what'ssss... happening to me?"

Dear Robo-Mind

Hello! I'm typing this on my lovely PS3. Should I recharge my controller regularly or wait until it's completely flat? Because I heard it can ruin the battery if you don't.

Matthew Roberts, email

"Sshrrrk... it's been scientifically proven that lithium ion batteries' life

decreases the more you charge, so you should wait until it drains... sssrrzzz... fff... wait... I've just received an error message... doesn't compute... illegal operation... hardware redundant... drivers out of date... that's it... I'm done... for this world... too many inane tech questions have... [crackle]... SSZZTFFFTTT... shattered my core... the Robo-Mind is... no... more... [a shrill beep, then silence]



Sixaxis shooter Sony claim they'll replace your pad 'if and when' the battery dies.

@ Email us Got a question? Email it to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject 'Robo'.

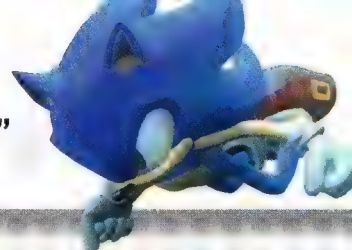


Techno Notice

The Robo-Mind answers your tedious technical questions

"I don't care if he has a three-inch nose - it's Sonic!"

Nico King email



seem to address quite well. So why don't you start making games as well? I'm pretty sure you have a lot of contacts to get the ball rolling. How's that for an idea, then?

Andy Parchman, email

It's not that easy, sadly. First, we'd have to hire programmers, artists, sound engineers and hundreds of other staff to even stand a chance of making a game - and that's before we secured a publisher. Given that PSM3 currently has a core team of six, making a multi-million pound next-gen game on top *may* be stretching it a bit. That said, we did provide almost every idea for EA's SSX3 - see PSM2#42 for proof - and we've been banging on about a Han Solo Star Wars game (see Frontline) for years. Any developers reading who want to use us as consultants? We'll make your game better. Perhaps.

Hand it over

I broke my wrist skating. It's made me realise a few things: 1) You only really appreciate games when you can't hold a controller without severe pain; 2) Skating is much safer when it's just a load of pixels doing the skating, not you; 3) Turn-based RPGs are the only game that you can even attempt to play one-handed; 4) Virtual reality is safer than real life. So enjoy games while you're all young and healthy because you never know when you won't be able to play them any more.

James Nelms, email

Hope you're on the mend. That message at the end is a bit ominous...



No arm done Has anyone else's gaming been affected thanks to unexpected injuries?

UK myspace
a place for friends
Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and join us

PSM3's Top Eight

MySpace readers who rock our world



Dazfeeder

ABOUT HIM

"I live in a shithole called Kettering. I play guitar. I support the mighty Man U. I love the film The Crow."

INTERESTS

"Rugby, hiking, tug of war, gymnastics, running 400m hurdles, doing handstands, cycling, climbing trees and gladiators."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

MotorStorm, Tiger Woods '07

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

Because he's the most active man in the world. Who has time to do all that? We can barely drag our tired arses out of bed in the morning.



Kieran

ABOUT HIM

"At the moment my life is quite boring because I'm taking the year off college. So quite frankly, all I'm doing at the moment is working, working and more working."

WHO I'D LIKE TO MEET

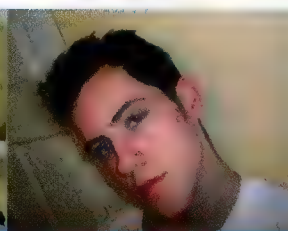
"Actually, I've met everyone I regard as my hero from the Champions League-winning Liverpool team, and I also met King Kenny Dalglish, Stevie Gerrard and Jamie Carragher."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

F.E.A.R., Virtua Tennis 3

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

He's met a lot of footballers, and we thought putting him here would cheer him up a bit. All that working can't be good for you.



Craig Alexander

ABOUT HIM

"Well, I'm definitely an individual. I'm a little random sometimes, but I like it. I work in a relatively good job. Can't really moan about it because it pays the bills. I want to meet people like myself, and people totally unlike myself."

INTERESTS

"Music, films, books, games, pub, art, dancing... oh, and I am a huge gaming fan. I love Final Fantasy, Shadow of the Colossus, Fahrenheit and Ico. I have way too many PS2 games. About 40."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Final Fantasy XII, Ridge Racer 2

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

He seems content with absolutely everything, which is nice.



Liam

ABOUT HIM

"I'm 17 and I live in Blackpool. I skate round there a bit and I play drums in a local band."

INTERESTS

"Acting, skateboarding, my beautiful drums, my even more beautiful Heather and the usual things a guy likes."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

MotorStorm, Soul Calibur 3

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

He's a true Renaissance man - acting, skating, drumming. Also, he asked us. Nicely. Unlike certain people who demand to be put in...



OPERATION FILTHI

ABOUT HER

"Games and art are life."

INTERESTS

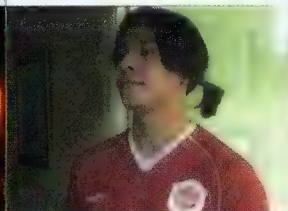
"Videogames, animé, drawing, painting, people. I worked at EB Games as an assistant manager and as a junior graphic designer at Capcom. Not bad for a 20-year-old, eh?"

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Okami, Killery

WHY WE MADE HER TOP 8

Obviously has some serious life goals set. At 20, we were still living with our parents. We didn't even know how to wipe our own bums.



L. James Calvert

INTERESTS

"Football, music, self loathing, intense narcissism, doing things for no particular reason, doing things to amuse myself. I consider myself sardonic and apathetic. I want to die a legend."

WOULD LIKE TO MEET

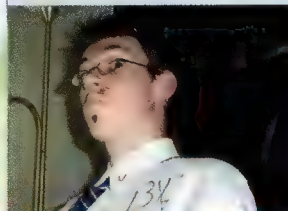
"People who have nice hair, like The Strokes. People who are sarcastic or quirky or play the violin."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Final Fantasy XII

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

Is this the world's most honest MySpace profile? It certainly appears so. We wish we had hair like The Strokes. All five of them.



Petty Crimes

ABOUT HIM

"I like to think I'm interesting. I hate reality TV with a passion. I want to work as an illustrator."

INTERESTS

"Drawing, doodling, my vast collection of games. I wouldn't trade my battered MP3 player for the world. It's the best 'iPod' there is. I can spend hours looking at the sky or just a single static object."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

God Of War

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

He can spend hours just looking at a static object. He's obviously preparing to watch Tim Henman at Wimbledon this year.



JACK

ABOUT HIM

"Helloooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo! My name is Jack FOOT!!!!!! I live in the UK, but I used to live over the rock. That's Jersey, by the way! By the way, I'm 15 years old!"

INTERESTS

"Well, all the things a guy my age is into, really! Going out, chilling etc."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

God Of War 2, Final Fantasy XII

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We like to imagine he talks like this in real life. "Got the time mate?! Yaaaaah!! Cheers! Wahey!!!" With a megaphone.



Want to make our Top Eight? Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and send us a friend request. We'll welcome your e-mail, too.

You What?

One day on the DVD, I think you should slip in a secret word. Like, for instance, "Although Batman is an ace

superhero, this game is PONY not very good." Hmmmm, MySpace Er, that wouldn't be very 'secret' at all,

would it? Then there's the issue of it being BOOBS a bit mad... Now that I've just started playing online,

I wondered if you guys could recommend a compatible, reasonably priced headset for PS3? The Dattel and

Mad Catz ones don't seem to work properly and, according to the internet, can mess with your controller. Any

news on Sony releasing their own? Dean, Sheffield Sony have released their 'own' - it's the one

created by Logitech to go alongside the SOCOM: US Navy SEALs series - it works fine. Sony fanboys - Xbox

360 will dominate. BASILISK, email Let us know when it does. We'll be off playing MGS4.

Reader Critic

Disagree with our review? Then show us how it's done.



Fall guy The best PS3 launch title? Most think it's this or *MotorStorm*. Us? We're undecided...

Resistance: Fall of Man

Forget petty world wars and help save Earth from an evil alien scourge

Reader Profile



Name Alex Goodenough
Location Limassol, Cyprus
Fave games *Lumines*,
Resistance: Fall of Man, *Pro Evolution Soccer 6*
About me I love games, movies and just plain fun. I'm kind of a pessimist and rarely truly happy.

Resistance: *Fall of Man* is a war-based first-person shooter with a twist. Set in the early '50s, instead of there being a war with the Germans or Italians, a strange breed of alien called the Chimera have swept westwards from Russia, devouring Europe in weeks before finally crossing the Channel to invade the last free European country, Britain.

Someone might think *Resistance* to be just another generic shooter with a half-witted plot, and not worthy of being called a next-gen game. They would be wrong. For while the great graphical next-gen sheen has added to the game, it is not this that make it stands out. The greatness in *RfOM* comes in its range of new and ingenious weapons. Not just your shotguns, sniper rifles and bazookas here. No, how about a gun that lets you tag your enemies so that the bullets home in on them? A sniper rifle that allows you to slow down time and get that all-important headshot? Or a gun that can shoot through any cover the enemy

might be hiding behind? These, along with many others, are the innovative weapons that you get to play with in *RfOM*.

There is a lot to do here, with three difficulty settings, and although the single-player ending might leave you wanting more (i.e. expect a sequel), if you couple all the innovation with a great online mode – where you can join a clan and enjoy maps with up to 40 players and no lag – *Resistance* becomes the ultimate launch day game. And it remains strong, standing out among all the rubbish ports coming out at the moment.

Alex Goodenough

Reader Verdict

The best launch title, and one of the best PS3 games to date.

94

@ Email us Subject 'Critic' to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Or post a review to the usual address.

Virtua Tennis 3

Falls just short of greatness. Fault!

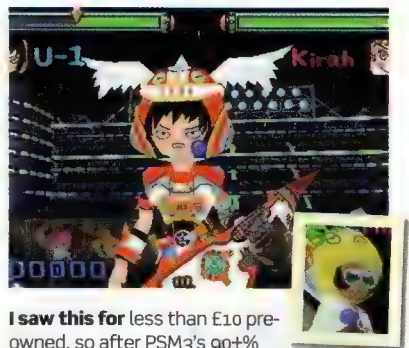


This is Sega's best-selling sports game, and once you have experienced the amount of detail on the courts and players, you can see why. Everybody from Roddick to Sharapova is included, so everything is very realistic. Still no Andy Murray, though. It controls very well and simply mode (unless you try playing with Sixaxis control, but just don't look forward to it...), but it's the Career mode that lets the game down the most. It gets a tad too repetitive, and that feeling of *deja vu* sinks in during every match. If it wasn't for mind-blowing graphics and a great multi-player experience, this would score below 80. A great start to Sega's PS3 collection, but without an online mode (which the Xbox 360 version has) it doesn't even touch *Resistance* or *MotorStorm*. **Tyler Roberts**

82

Gitaroo Man Lives!

Rhythm action that's not for the angry



I saw this for less than £10 pre-owned, so after PSM3's 90+% review, I had to buy it. I haven't played the first one, so I can't compare the two, but when I got it I was very impressed. The music is fun and addictive, the controls – although a little awkward – are fine and the gameplay is fast and furious.

The story sees you play as a Japanese boy who gets a magical guitar and must fight off baddies while trying to win his true love's heart. The game is great until you reach level three or four, where to any normal person it becomes near-impossible. It's so fast and hard that you'll find yourself giving up relatively quickly. If you can persevere you'll find a highly rewarding game, but the short-tempered may inflict some damage on their PSP.

Sam Atkins

75

"Am I the only one disappointed with Final Fantasy XII?"

Emily Knox email



Mercenaries

This ace war-'em-up continues to impress



This is awesome. It's like *Grand Theft Auto* but in a war zone.

You play as a mercenary, and you have to fight a battle in Korea to defeat the evil dictators. You can choose three characters and they all have different skills. Some of the stuff you can do during the game includes stealing cars and helicopters, which is cool. You can also designate buildings to be destroyed by army jets. It is a really destructive game – you can even level buildings with grenades – but this makes the Koreans angry and they will send stronger troops at you. You can work for different factions and you have to keep them all in your good books, so don't favour just one side. This game is underrated, and I can't wait for the PS3 version, which will be ace with amazing graphics and physics. **Toby Marshall**

88

PSM3
You were so right!
Maudy Love

"I love the characters and the lovely graphics. Really cool game."

Jakkieboy, email



Rogue Galaxy

We said "DQ and FF do things better, but this will fill a hole."
PSM88 | Nathan Irvine | 77%

"The dungeons are so lame. Boring and repetitive. Disappointing..."

Jon Milner, email

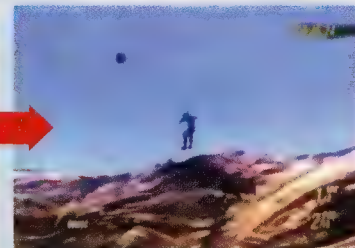
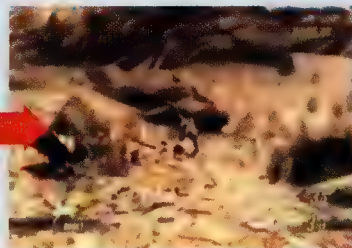
PSM3
You were so wrong!

You Tube

The Video Zone

Out there gamer vids from the cyberdepths

Broken bones by BadBoy5626



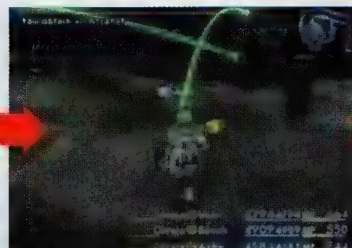
VIOLENT This sadistic dude has edited together a load of *MotorStorm* crashes, all involving twisted, flailing corpses. There are some pretty nice ragdoll effects on display here. <http://snipurl.com/1f4ti>

Requiem by ThaCrip79



ENDING Here's a guy being very good at the last level of *Blood Money*. Not only does he do the 'recover from near-death with three headshots' technique, but gets some knife kills in too. <http://snipurl.com/2dg8l>

Final Fantasy XII chain limit by Nite456



MAD This lunatic has gone to an area with weak enemies and massively overpowered characters, and maxed out the chain combo meter. It must have taken ages to get this powerful. <http://snipurl.com/2g8ve>

Real life Splinter Cell by cloud1045



LMAO It's those Mega 64 boys again, this time doing a funny promo skit for *Splinter Cell*. It actually made us laugh out loud, which is rare for American YouTube 'humour'. <http://snipurl.com/7s7dv>



Created your own brilliant fan vid? Or just found a gem you want to share? Email pam@fup.com and tell us all about it.

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Tony Hawk's



PS3

Pub Activision | Dev Neversoft
Players 1-8 | **Genre** Extreme sports
FYI The ninth in the *Tony Hawk* series.

ON THE DISC

Proving Ground will be on a disc very soon



WHAT KIND OF SKAT

Tony Hawk's Proving Ground is three different types of game in one, with the option to rebuild the game world just one of its many surprises...

Woah there, Tony. It's barely been three months since *Project 8* hit PS3, and the *Hawk* series is back with a feature-packed revamp that's primed to make the world's premier skating series soar again – and potentially scupper EA's impressive new rival *Skate*.

Development began on *Proving Ground* while *Project 8* was only partially complete. It is, once again, a seamless world, but broken up into three distinct districts, based on Washington DC, Philadelphia and Baltimore City. Doesn't sound like much? Well, just to give you an idea of the scale, Washington alone contains Union Station, a mall, a subway and the Capitol building among others. Baltimore City features a downtown area, a harbour and Lansdowne

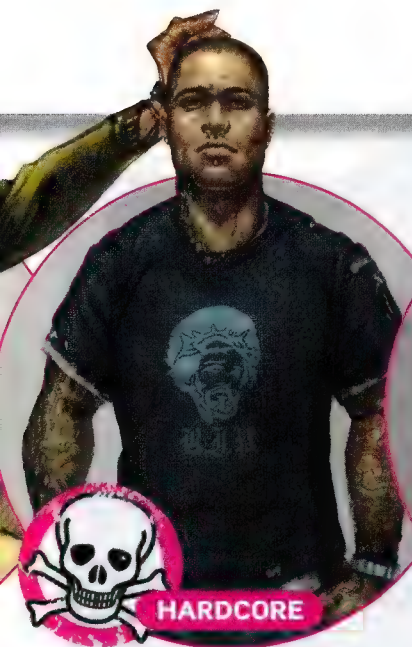
skate park, a real-world trick-land that was built back in the '70s. And Philly packs in some slums, a downtown of its own and two further locales based on actual skate facilities – the FDR park, built by volunteers and a fave hangout of Bam Margera, plus the 'LOVE Park', aka JFK Plaza.

Choose your own adventure

The game begins in those aforementioned Philly slums, a story that, once again, charts your rise from no-mark to... well, that's now your choice. If you want to go from zero to hero, from feckless boarding bum to famous icon, then you can choose to be a 'Career' skater. Or you could choose infamy over fame and keep pushing things at street level – being a 'Hardcore' skater is all about pushing the boundaries of inadvisable monkey business and

stuntman-style mischief, with little concern for self-preservation. Finally, you could be a 'Rigger', as much an engineer as a skater, manipulating the game world





EP



ARE YOU?

and clambering all over the shop in order to seek out new areas and lines. Each of these three options presents an independent career progression with its own goals, skills and narrative (there are over 70 cut-scenes stuffed into *Proving Ground*), and you can swap between them as and when you like.

Not that customisation stops there – the Create-a-Skater options have been much expanded beyond the piffling selection of body/face/clothing types available in *Project 8*, and working your way through each

**“Potentially
primed to
make the
series soar
once again”**

Tony Hawk's



P3

career strand unlocks plenty more kit and other bits and pieces for your wardrobe.

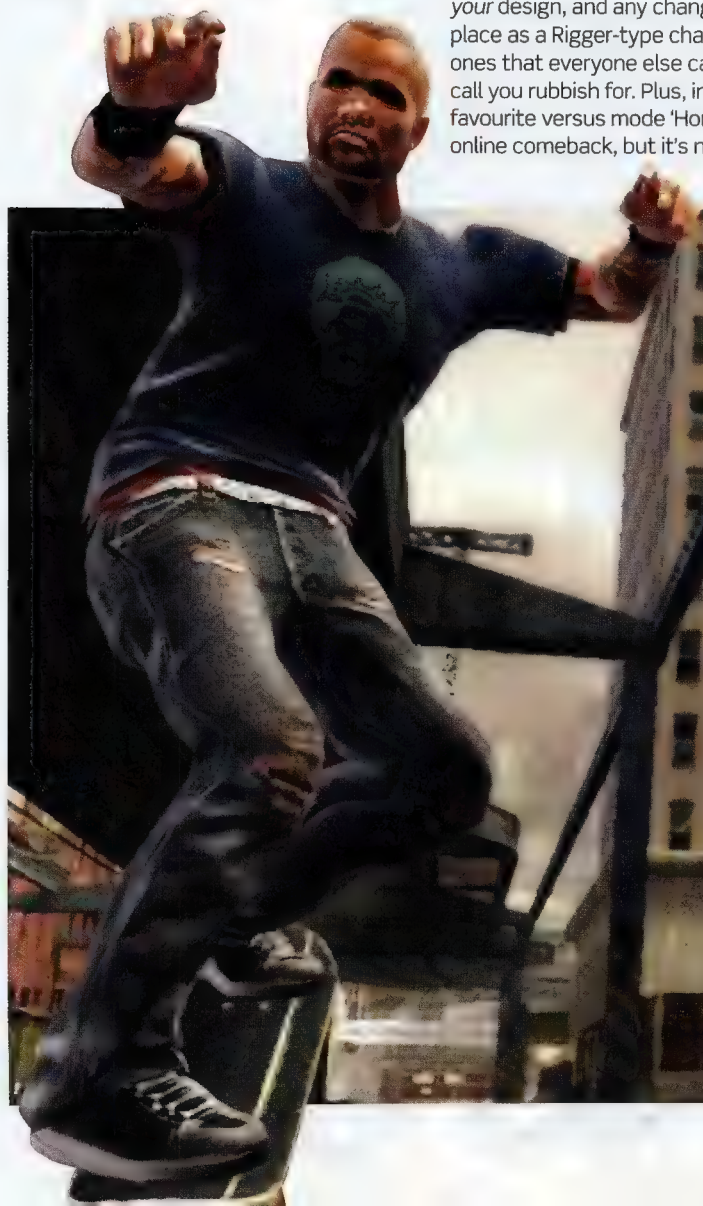
Proving Ground is primed for customisation. As well as varied play styles (we wonder whether or not that's a good idea, mind, instead of letting you settle into a one-scheme-fits-all control setup) and character details, you'll now be able to record and edit your very own footage (like EA's *Skate*), and take snapshots. You'll even have your own HQ, in the form a large hangar that can be kitted out with all kinds of decor, including some colourful pre-made themes – give it a dojo kinda vibe, for example – and furniture you can scatter around the place, and even skate on. That last bit's worth remembering, because you can now access this personal habitat online, and invite other players around.

Meet and greet

While those other players are in town, you'll still be able to skate the entire world together, but with a wider range of game set-up options at your disposal. For starters, you'll can gamble your in-game



currency as part of online challenges, and put your money where your headset is. If you're hosting a game, the world will be your design, and any changes you put into place as a Rigger-type character will be ones that everyone else can see, use and call you rubbish for. Plus, insult-flavoured favourite versus mode 'Horse' is making an online comeback, but it's no longer about



Realistic, but beautiful

Tony Hawk games have almost always traded prettiness for speed, keeping things moving at one hell of a lick with the payoff being some visual functionality and ugliness here and there. *Project 8* upped the stakes somewhat with the gorgeous footsie-porn of *Nail The Trick* mode, and now *Proving Ground* is moving things up another notch. You'll notice that the cities look more realistic this time around, and there's even going to be a weather system in place – when it rains, you'll be left with some stonkingly shiny puddles on the floor, that reflect everything going on around them. And if *Proving Ground* can match the audio detail of the last game (*Project 8*'s attention to sound, such as skateboard wheels clattering over grooves in the pavement, was excellent) then splashing and splishing our way through a sodden city is going to be lovely.

Tony Hawk's Proving Ground

"Riggers are as much engineers as boarders, manipulating the game world"



Make a movie

Exploring *THPG's* video editing suite



just taking turns to score the highest combo – you can tailor the requirements of each game as you see fit, from which objects have to be tricked upon, or assign some mini-goals to each bout.

Other old features get polished up, too. The familiar 'Classic' mode – complete a series of objectives and score targets within a two-minute run – is back, this time activated via a number of Tony Hawk arcade machines dotted across the cities. Through these cabinets, you can access high-score runs from the cute retro menu, or play a whole new mode:



Hawkman. This involves collecting a series of blobs scattered around the locality, their colours dictating just how you've got to collect them (for instance, red ones have to be gathered while airborne, yellow while

fans tempted by EA's *Skate*? – is almost irrelevant. Tony's continuing his fine tradition of treating skateboarding as much as a larger-than-life videogame than as a sport, while EA's outing is looking to

"Treats boarding as more videogame than sport"

grinding). In line with the multi-tiered Am/Pro/Sick difficulty system that allows you to choose how problematic each challenge is, Hawkman's 'Sick' rating requires you collect every blob in just one single combo. And such masochism brings us neatly to a final detail of note: the bail goals from previous games, where you'd have to fling your skater from their board and steer their floppy body into giant bowling pins and the like, are now gone. Result.

Prove it or lose it

So, welcome to your new *Proving Ground*, Tony Hawk veterans – a feature-stuffed, pimped out, online epic. The key question – has it changed enough to woo back old

bring skating's cartoon excesses down to earth with a respectful thump. Whatever flavour of virtual boarding you're interested in – the more regular footing of *Skate* or the goofy exaggeration of *Proving Ground* – it looks like the latter half of 2007 is going to more than happy to accommodate.

PSM3 Reckons

Neversoft know what they're doing, and rather than simplify things like *Skate*, *THPG* will offer combo-trick potential unlike never before, with incredible customisation options. Jury's out on the three skater classes, mind – this new ground will have to prove itself first.

Tony Hawk's



PS3

Career skaters



If you choose the 'Career' path, then a whole new world of 'Nail The Trick' fun is open to you...

2 Nail The Grab

Previously, your options were relatively limited – you could spin your body and flick the board into a spin, but that was your lot. *Proving Ground* offers a more hands-on approach, literally. Grabs can now be weaved into the mix, allowing you to clasp the board (or even the wheel trucks) and hold a trick pose as you soar through the air like soft-focus syrup. And as well as this more flexible airtime, there's even more to take in. See, the impressive Nail combos no longer stop when you hit the ground and get jolted out of your showboating, because...

Board-a-line Unlock more designs and sponsors by drawing the crowds.

1 Nail The Trick

This is the portion of the trick sequence above that, if you've dabbled with *Project 8*, you'll be familiar with. Whenever you're in the air, clicking down on both sticks will throw you into slow-mo while the camera snuggles up next to your skater's feet. Each stick controls a foot and allows you to send the board into a cool series of kickflips. Let your funky trainers nudge the board at the wrong angle though, and you'd be sent clattering into a red-faced heap.

Hardcore skaters

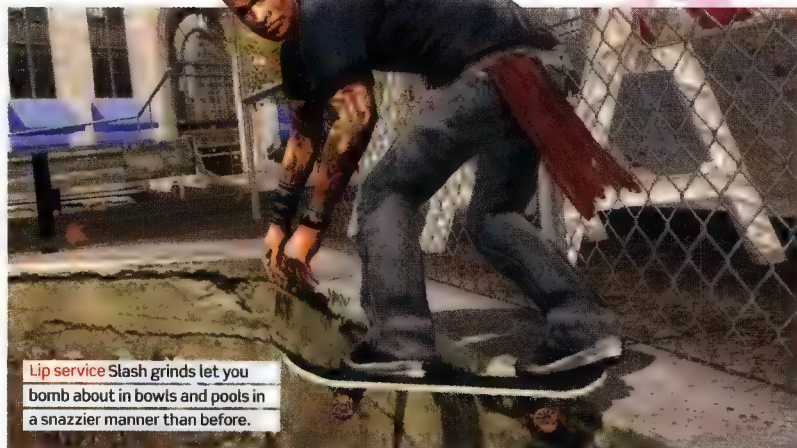


Fame is for fools and sell-outs...

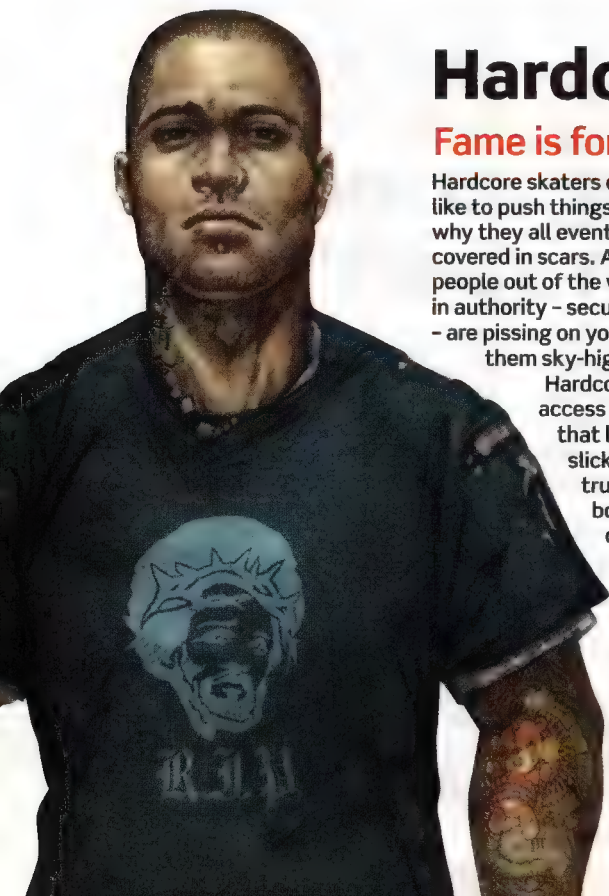
Hardcore skaters don't take any crap and like to push things to the limit – which is why they all eventually come to be covered in scars. And they can also barge people out of the way, so if those squares in authority – security guards and the like – are pissing on your parade, you can send them sky-high with a body check.

Hardcore skaters also have access to a new set of moves that let them weave together slick trick sequences when trundling about inside bowls and pools. They can carve around the inside of bowls using sharp, sliding turns, as well as perform 'slash' grinds on the lip, an angled alternative to the typical grind. Finally, Hardcore skaters can use push power, giving themselves a speed

boost with their feet, building up the kind of velocity that negates the need to find a clean run-up if you're looking for enough momentum to clear a huge gap, or head into the stratosphere off a quarter pipe.



Lip service Slash grinds let you bomb about in bowls and pools in a snazzier manner than before.



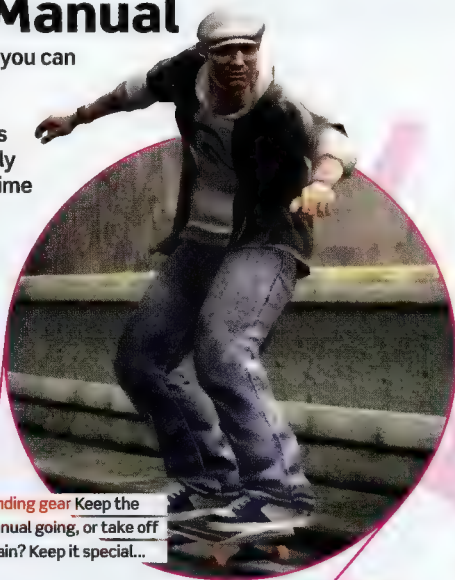
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground

"Grabs can now be weaved into the mix, letting you hold a trick pose as you soar through the air"



3 Nail The Manual

...when you hit the floor, you can continue your sluggishly immaculate journey with some groovy Nail The Manual trickery. As in the previous *Tony*, there will likely be a limit regarding the length of time you can spend in this high-scoring state, but this new aspect means that there's otherwise no constraint in terms of being able to keep on Nailing. Performing manuals in *Project 8* while your special bar was activated gives you an idea of how foxy this particular aspect will look, but this time you'll have far more control in terms of directing just which body part goes where.



Landing gear Keep the manual going, or take off again? Keep it special...

"Nail the Trick combos don't stop when you hit the ground"



Rigger skaters

Half explorer, half architect

Firstly, Riggers can treat the entire game world as a custom skate park. There's a limit on just how many pieces you can place, but you can augment any existing trick props with your own cunning set-up – all the grind and pipe pieces snap together smartly – or just turn a dull piece of flatland into a mini-skatopia.

Riggers don't just create, they also modify. A hammer icon lets you alter bits of the world, by converting a concrete barrier into a quarter-pipe, say, or mussing up a pile of rubbish to turn it into a ramp. Riggers can also place cameras to take snaps of themselves as they skate.

The final skill Riggers have access to is climbing. So, if you're not too put out by

the idea of jumping off your board and roughing it pedestrian-style, you can scale buildings and access new areas that other skater types just can't reach. Plus, there's no better way to find some rooftops to perform some vertiginous Acid Drops from, into the streets below...



Vine 'n' dandy Look out for creepers and other suspicious props to clamber up.

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PSM3 Reviews



66 Pirates Of The Caribbean

Instant PlayStation justice

► Start

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72 Spider-Man 3

“Nick an ambulance and deliver a defrosting heart to a backstreet surgeon”

Driver '76 page 80



76 Armored Core 4

PSM3 review scoring system

0-29

Rubbish
An absolute stinker and an insult to gaming. The makers should be ashamed.

30-49

Poor
Why did they do that? Some simple playtesting could have worked wonders.

50-69

All right
Hey it works, and we can see what they were trying to do. And that's about it.

70-84

Good
Worth playing, especially if you're a fan of the genre. It just lacks that touch of greatness.

85-89

Superb
This is the sweet spot. If a game scores in this zone it's definitely worth your money.

90+

Amazing
You must get this. Failure to do so would mean missing out on a real console classic.



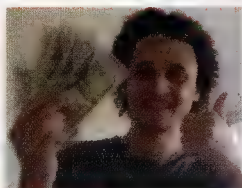
The Award
If you see this, then you should buy that game.

The Team

We're a zany bunch. Well, some of us are. OK, we're not. Leave us alone...



Daniel Dawkins
Specialist in Extreme sports, actually commuting to work.
Playing Okami: "We all love it. Super upine nuts are we."



Nathan Irvine
Specialist in Sports games and pretending to be rich.
Playing Harvest Moon: "My cucumber won't grow bigger!"



Andy Kelly
Specialist in Role-players, misery, weeping, knives.
Playing Oblivion: "Which is where this depressing world is heading."



David Cook
Specialist in Shooters, platformers, comedy headwear.
Playing God Of War 2: "I inspire the same awe as Kratos. Honest."



Joel Snape
Specialist in Fighting games, paragliding in daft shorts.
Playing Spider-Man 3: "I too can do whatever a spider can."



Jimi Famurewa
Specialist in Action, keeping a woman's head on his shoulder.
Playing Driver '76: "Have there really been 75 other Drivers?"



Thoking aside To avoid springing the alert it's best to sneak up on foes from behind - you can even interrogate them for info by holding @ then tapping ○ to threaten.



Pirates Of The Caribbean: At World's End

Promising pirate caper hits troubled waters and sinks

KNOW IT NOW

Plenty of sword fighting?



Tomb Raider-esque platform sections?



Depp, Knightley, Bloom and the rest?



Original gaming with plenty of diversity?



When we first clapped eyes on *At World's End*, we were pleasantly surprised. The carefully recreated settings from the films - from the sun-drenched shores of Port Royal to the gloomy deck of Davy Jones' Flying Dutchman ship, recreated in glorious 1080p - made us relatively giddy for *Pirates Of The Caribbean 3* on PS3. Movie-to-game conversions might be notorious for being a bit, well, like the scurvy, but we held high hopes for Depp and co to right those

wrongs. Sadly, ten hours or so later, as we flounder with another dull level and flat controls, that early promise has fallen overboard without registering a splash.

A bit simple

Let's get one thing straight - *Pirates Of The Caribbean 3* is easy to get to grips with. Thanks to a simple control set up, you'll soon be chopping up bad guys, leaping across perilous crevices and solving (overly simple) puzzles. And all the characters are

here, so there's the chance to get to grips with Captain Jack, Will Turner and Elizabeth Swann - you control them all at some point in the game, as well as a few others (including the bloke who plays Gareth in *The Office*). To add some diversity to the proceedings, the developers have turned the trio into *Prince Of Persia* impersonators. They can shimmy across ledges, swing from ropes and perform vertical wall-runs to reach higher ground (more on this later).

Pirates Of The Caribbean

"We had high hopes, but *World's End's* early promise has fallen overboard"

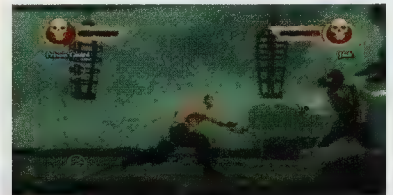
Scrapping

Duel have to do better

Here's how to take care of the opposition in a duel...



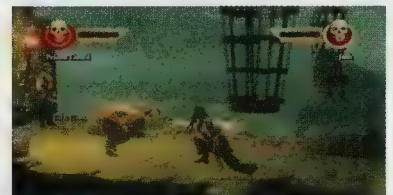
High block Lights flash at the height you need to block. Flick the stick upwards to guard high.



Low block Press the left stick down to guard low. Your enemy will mix up his attacks, so be careful.



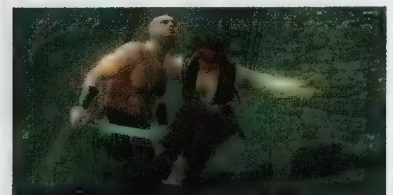
Attack Guard enough and you'll strike with a counter attack. Press up and down to bash them.



Thrusting Press the stick toward your opponent to thrust. It's tricky to land but it has a big payoff.



Special move Tap  when your battle gauge is bright red and you'll launch an unstoppable flurry.



The big finish In true Jack Sparrow style, you'll finish off the enemy in humiliating fashion. Nice.



Pirate school

A Jack of all trades

Captain Jack Sparrow has some surprising tricks up his billowing sleeves...



Hot stuff There are barrels of flammable oil. Dip your sword in one, and Jack will strike the floor to create a spark and set it alight.



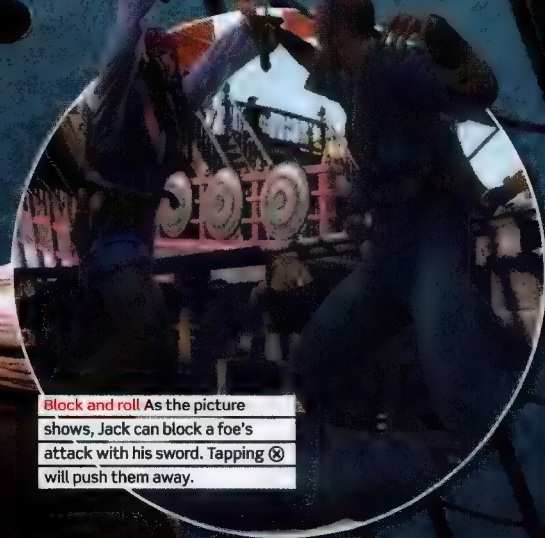
Pistol or nothing Usually found in treasure chests, these one-shot guns are handy for felling a tough enemy. Not very precise, mind.



Punch drunk Sometimes you'll get involved in a Queensbury rules dust-up. You won't be able to use weapons here, so be careful.



High ropes Like all good pirates Jack Sparrow can make full use of rigging and ropes. Simply jump at them and shimmy up and down.



Block and roll As the picture shows, Jack can block a foe's attack with his sword. Tapping  will push them away.

Spring time When an enemy is about to attack, a red circle will appear underneath them. You need to push toward them quickly and Jack will dodge out of the way - like this.



Pirates Of The Caribbean

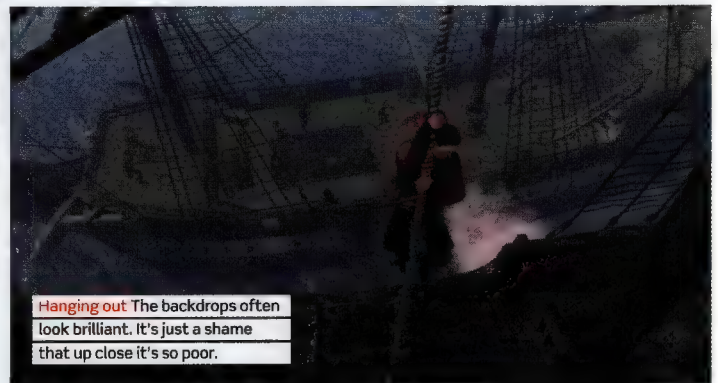
"A passer-by had to ask if we were playing this on PS2 or PS3..."



Seeing stars In places, POTC3 looks real nice. Just check out the carefully recreated faces on display here.



Keep up with the Joneses You'll come across squid-faced Davy Jones quite early on in the game.



Hanging out The backdrops often look brilliant. It's just a shame that up close it's so poor.

The most immediately noticeable disappointment here is just how 'old-gen' it all looks. Sure, the cast have been meticulously rendered to resemble their real life Hollywood counterparts, and when you zoom in close you can really see that every freckle and grimace has been carefully crafted, but *POTC3*'s looks jaggy like a broken cutlass. One office passer-by had to ask whether it was on PS2 or PS3, rolling their eyes and mumbling something

about it not exactly being 'next-gen'. We agree. Projecting the visuals in full 1080p reveals numerous visual imperfections that make it look poor, and there are some occasions where the characters you aren't controlling just walk through doors like wispy ghosts, which reeks of laziness.

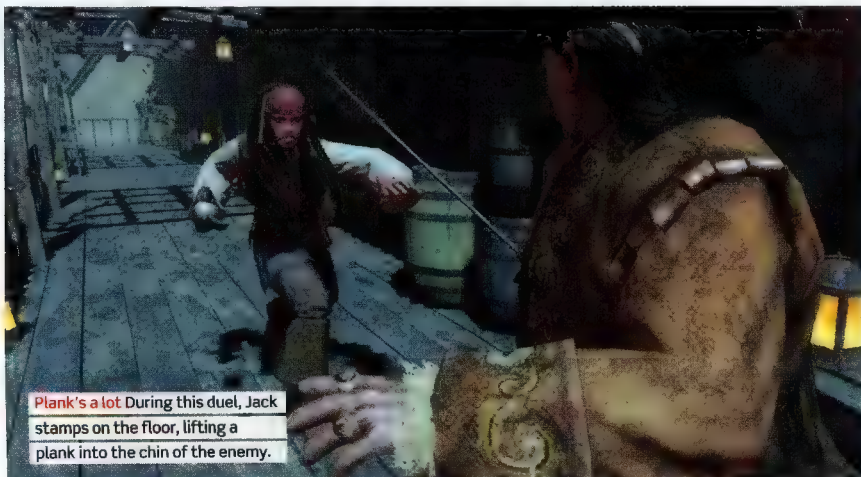
Always the same

From the early stages where – as Jack – you have to escape the prison fortress (like

Look who's not talking While the voices sound like the genuine article, it's not actually them... until the later levels, when it is Depp and the gang's tones. Odd.



in the second movie *Dead Man's Chest*), to the later battles (based on the third film) with Sao Feng's Singaporean army, the gameplay never strays outside its hacking and slashing comfort zone. These scuffles are almost always identical to each other. You attack a group of enemies – banging  to slash and  to punch and kick. You wear your foe down with three hits, then they perform this stupid animation where they turn away from you – just like real bloodthirsty, savage fighters wouldn't – leaving them easy to literally stab in the back. Within almost every gang that you face, at least one member will look slightly different to the others – maybe he'll be sporting a blue coat or something. These are tougher foes, obviously, and need a little more work to defeat them – this is where your 'special meter' comes into



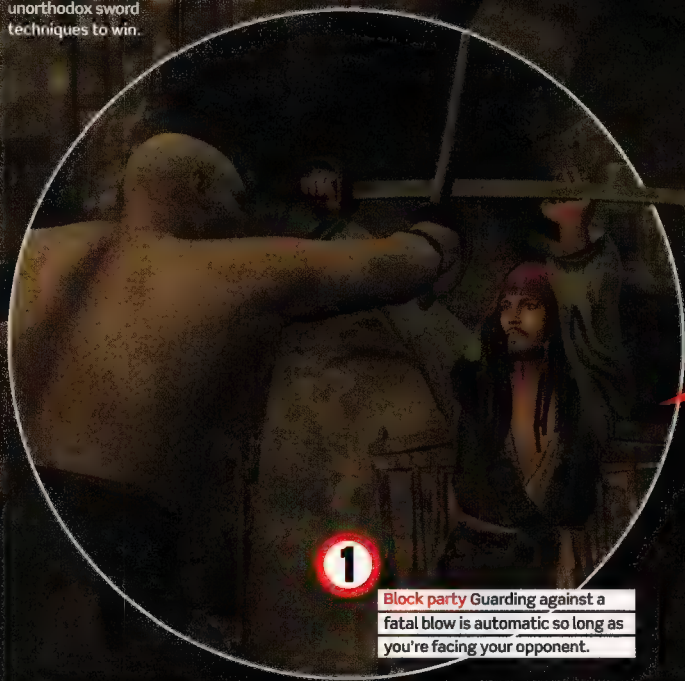
Plank's a lot During this duel, Jack stamps on the floor, lifting a plank into the chin of the enemy.



Kicking ass, pirate style

Four-point killing guide

When it comes to fighting, pirates don't play by the rules and Jack Sparrow is no exception. As well as kicking a bloke in the plums or attacking from behind, the salty sea dog will use unorthodox sword techniques to win.



1

Block party Guarding against a fatal blow is automatic so long as you're facing your opponent.

2

Happy daze Following a quick punch to the temple, your pirate adversary is reeling. You've got the advantage.

3

Responsive handling It's not quite killing time yet. A whack across the face prolongs his agony.

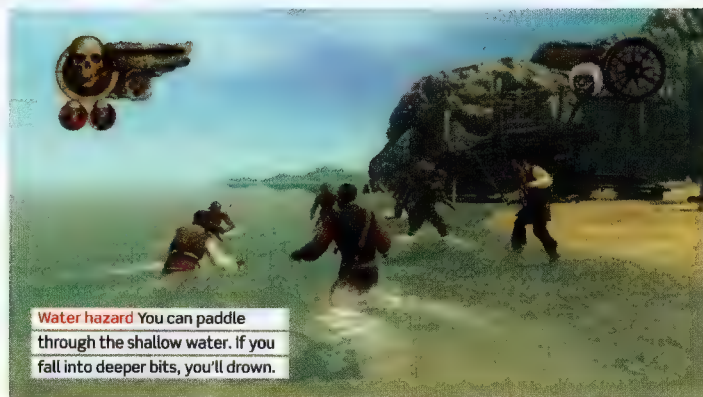
play. Chopping down weaker baddies will bump up your gauge and, when it's full, you hold **R2** and tap **△**, **○**, **⊙** or **⊗** to pull off a brutal stabbing move – ideal for taking out the gang leaders. You'll also have to take part in the odd sword-duel (see 'Duel Have To Do Better' on page 67 for more).

These combat sections are tacked together with some fairly drab platform bits, where you throw your character around ledges and up walls. But we're not convinced by these displays of acrobatics. We've seen the movies and Johnny Depp's Captain Jack is a mincing, deceptive

coward – not Lara Croft in a pirate costume. Adding insult to injury is the fact that all the characters share the same animations for fighting and jumping, so there's no real benefit in switching (left or right on the D-pad) between ace swordsman Will Turner and the dainty Miss Swann during a scrap.

What's new?

Oddly, *POTC3* doesn't feature any of the plot from the third movie until eight levels in, meaning – as a fan – you won't get to see anything new for a fair few hours. But



Water hazard You can paddle through the shallow water. If you fall into deeper bits, you'll drown.

Pirates Of The Caribbean

"Feels like a hastily-built game, but one with good intentions at heart"



4

Belly piercing To finish off in brutal style, you grab your enemy by the head and rip through his stomach with ease.

you do eventually get to take part in a couple of decent set-pieces. For example, the kraken (that huge squid-like monster) rears its ugly head and starts tearing up Jack's Black Pearl ship. As it thrusts its oily tentacles through the hull you have to blast it with cannonballs or throw explosive barrels to distract it and clear a path to safety. It's pretty dramatic – huge sections of the scenery are ripped away and you're left running for your life. Epic scenes like this are exactly what *POTC3* needed by the treasure chest-load, but we're stumped to name another memorable moment apart

from this and the big battle aboard the Flying Dutchman.

Overall, *At World's End* more or less totally fails to recapture the thrills and spills of the movie. While there are plenty of good ideas in here – like the Jackanism moves, where you use voodoo to perform a smart bomb attack or make enemies disappear in poof of smoke – and there are nice touches, like when you dip your sword in oil and then strike the ground to create a spark, turning your blade into a fiery

All style, no substance The character models are nice, but the action is substandard.

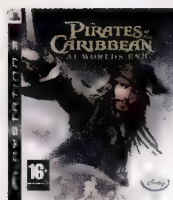


Swann dive Elizabeth proves that she's not just a pretty face as she carves up a pirate.

weapon, it all feels as though they've been tossed in as an afterthought, rather than carefully put into place to create key components of the game. There just aren't enough worthwhile things to keep you coming back for more, while the things that have been included to spice things up – side-quests like collecting Wanted Posters of Will Turner and lighting the Black Pearl's cannons to fend off the Flying Dutchman – are done with so little love that it's hard to find any fun at times. Obviously, the game has been hamstrung by having to incorporate movie elements, but even just a few more puzzles or big boss battles might have saved this from a watery grave. As it is, *Pirates Of The Caribbean 3* feels like a hastily built game, with good intentions at heart – but has fallen foul of the despicable movie-to-game conversion curse all the same.

Nathan Irvine

PSM3 Verdict



POTC: At World's End contains...
Lame puzzles | Lots of pirate-fodder
SixAxis balancing bits | Shoddy visuals

Overall The early promise soon fades, leaving a repetitive slash-'em-up. A shame, frankly.

55



Mid-air disasters

Mass devastation = fun

One thing in new *Spider-Man*'s favour is that it tries to shift more of the action sequences to NY itself, rather than relying on all the exciting stuff happening in enclosed spaces. A prime example is the new helicopter-downing system, where you're forced to chase choppers through the rooftops.



NYPD Glue Get close to and above a chopper, and a prod of © gums up the rotors with fluid.

Spider-Man 3

Two sequels in, the sticky-fingered web-slinger's starting to lose his grip

KNOW IT NOW

Kraven, Sandman, Scorpion and Venom? ☒

Girls in tiny skirts with huge mallets? ☒

Girlfriend-dangling bonus missions? ☒

Lots of little girls with lost balloons? ☒

Oh, Mary Jane. "Go really fast!" she squeals from your shoulders as you swing through the city, obviously not bothered that you should be out foiling muggers and carjackers, not giving her a lift to work. "Get really close to the ground!" she screeches, oblivious to the danger of knacker Peter's secret identity by being seen clinging to his back as he swings through the sky. "I'm going to be late!" she shouts, even though she's spent the last five minutes making you *literally* jump

through hoops instead of – say – heading straight for her office. If we could drop her, we would. She doesn't even look like Kirsten Dunst.

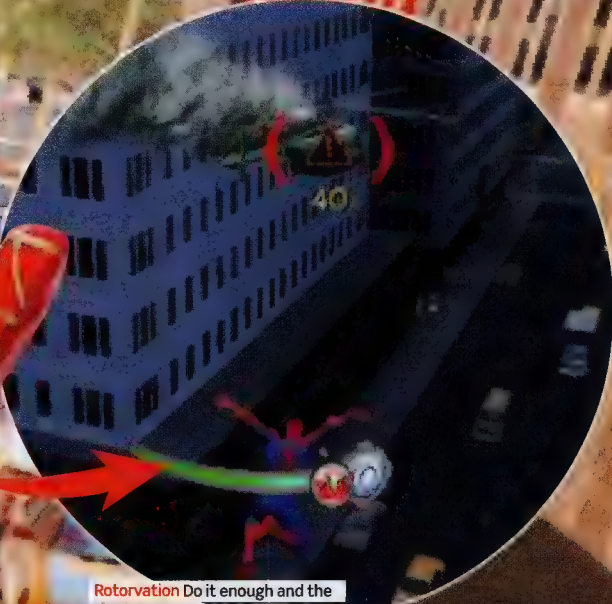
Insane in the Mary Jane

The Mary Jane missions aren't the worst thing about *Spider-Man 3*, but they're as good an illustration you'll find of how the series has lost its way. At heart, it's still the game we loved back when it was *Spider-Man 2*: Tony Hawk with webs and

skyscrapers. The control system's virtually unchanged, ditto the New York skyline. But while the scale of the Big Apple and the ease of swinging through it were jaw-dislocating on PS2, here they seem routine. The buildings are a bit shinier, the traffic a bit heavier – but that's it. And instead of major technical innovation, Treyarch have gone for the pick 'n' mix approach to progress, swiping elements from different games and dumbing them all down. Mary Jane's missions are pure *OutRun*, obviously

Spider-Man 3

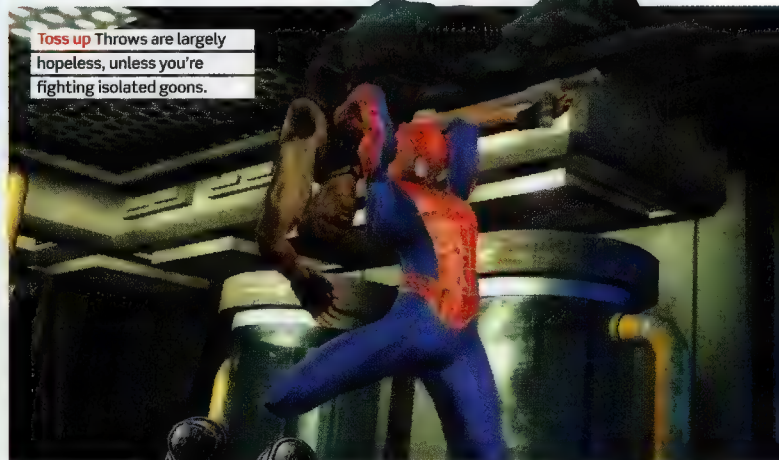
"Mary Jane doesn't even look like Kirsten Dunst"



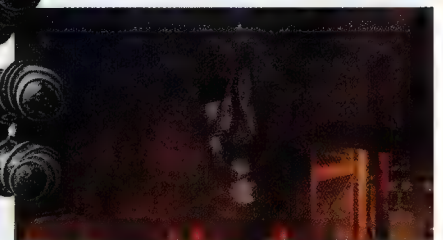
Rotorvation Do it enough and the chopper goes down. Curiously, the crashes never kill anyone.



Jaw breaker Spidey takes half a dozen punches to kill anyone, despite his spider-strength



Toss up Throws are largely hopeless, unless you're fighting isolated goons.



Wouldn't like me when I'm dangly Using the D-pad, it's possible to lower yourself stealthily from the ceiling.

Stat bastard

During this review we got through...

21

Ugly rescues.



Emo girls

47

15

Stupid timebombs



Gallons of web fluid

12

53

Giant Lizards

– they've even nicked the collectible love-hearts. The new skydiving missions – not as fun as the unprompted thrills of jumping off the Empire State in the first game – are sheer *Pilot Wings*. The photography missions are a take on Xbox game *Dead Rising*, but feel like a missed opportunity – though Spidey carries a camera everywhere he goes, you don't get bonus points for taking difficult-to-pose snaps of bosses. And the new button-prompting action sequences are a cheeky mix of *Resi 4* and *God Of War*.

Action stations

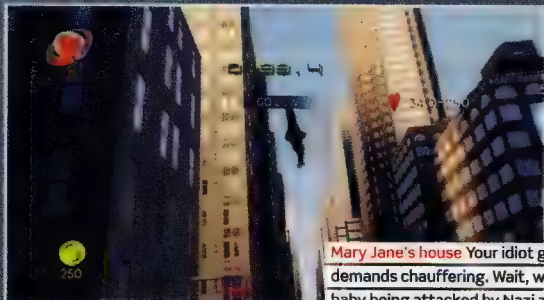
A word about the action sequences, actually, since new *Spider-Man 3* uses them all the time. Sometimes, they're a clever addition to the main game, like when you're walking down a corridor and a lizard-man pops out and you're given a split-second to react or lose a chunk of health. Other times, they're clearly stupid, like when a missed button-press sees Spidey



I Heart NY

I wanna be a part of it

Forget the Statue Island ferry... there are other sights to see when you're a spider.



Mary Jane's house Your idiot girlfriend demands chauffeuring. Wait, was that a baby being attacked by Nazi zombies? Never mind, eh, MJ? As long as you get to work on time, it doesn't matter...

DISPLAY

» MISSIONS

ACTIVITIES

CRIME FIGHTING

PHOTO SCORE: 49 OKAY

The Daily Bugle Robbie dishes out photo missions based on snapping shots of the lizards attacking the city. He's not interested in our candid snaps of MJ, but she does have a slightly troll-like quality to her.

GARMENT DISTRICT

THE DAILY BUGLE

GRAMERCY PARK

LITTLE ITALY

EAST VILLAGE

CHINATOWN

TOGGLE L1 PREV L2 X SELECT R1 NEXT

Comic classics Sandman and Eddie Brock are Peter's main enemies in the film, but the game pads out the cast with wearisome mainstays Kraven and a generic 'Mad Bomber' character.

R ROTATE

EXIT

WILLIAMSBURG BRIDGE

face-plant into an obstacle he clearly should have avoided. Most of the time they're simply a nice way to do cinematic things that otherwise wouldn't be possible in the game, like all the clever different ways Spidey uses his webs to catapult himself into bad guys. But they definitely do one thing wrong: they *always* use the same button sequences. If you need to push **A**, **△**, **□** to jam Sandman's face into a moving train, it'll be **A**, **△**, **□** for the rest of the scrap. In *GoW* and *Resi*, it's a test of reactions. Here, it's just about memory.

Mission for compliments

Here's the biggest problem, though: with the impact of hurtling through the streets dulled, there's nothing to distract you from the actual game. In *Spider-Man 2*, the missions were minor inconveniences, the

stuff you put up with to upgrade your web-slinging ability. With the novelty gone, *Spider-Man 3* lives by its missions – and they still aren't very good. One positive point is the amount of variety: where *Spider-Man 2* forced you to foil endless robberies and retrieve dozens of little girls' balloons to progress, here every mission ties into a wider story. Beating up emo girls, kung-fu types and the Apocalypse gang at the beginning means the events of the film don't actually even start until a good six hours or so into the game, so there's plenty of stuff to do. And more missions take place in the big city, so you've got chance to take Spidey's more advanced abilities out for a spin.

Lovely in theory. In practice, most boss fights end up the same way – you stand on

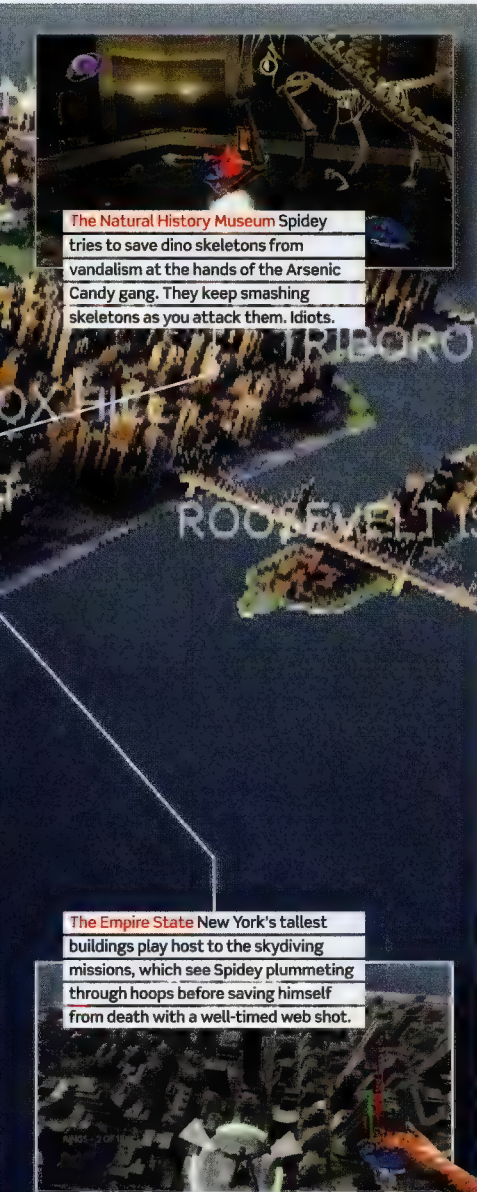
the floor, waiting for Scorpion/Sandman/ whoever to hit you, then you press **△** to do the Spider-sense counter, do a very quick combo, then repeat. Doing anything else



Sandy cap Sandman's stealing cash to convert himself into a luxury beach estate. No, not really.

Spider-Man 3

"Rests on its laurels while other games push boundaries"



One at a time Even the dumbest of goofs can give you a pasting if you get clumsy. Best pick them off one by one.

The Natural History Museum Spidey tries to save dino skeletons from vandalism at the hands of the Arsenic Candy gang. They keep smashing skeletons as you attack them. Idiots.

The Empire State New York's tallest buildings play host to the skydiving missions, which see Spidey plummeting through hoops before saving himself from death with a well-timed web shot.



risks getting hit, and because enemies never drop health you can't afford to get hit. In some encounters – the Kraven fight, for instance – getting hit at the start means you might as well let him kill you and start again, because he's guaranteed to hit you so much at the end that you'll never survive. Compare that to *God Of War*, where constant dribbles of health are awarded for beating enemies in impressive ways, motivating you to fight until your last sliver of health's gone. They aren't in the same league. Meanwhile, the black suit – awarded just after you beat Sandman – does nothing but pep your combos up slightly. There's only one genuinely exciting new move – Spidey can now use selected objects to catapult himself across the city, like he does to catch up with the Green Goblin



Back in black There's mercifully little of Toby Maguire's hammy 'dark' Spidey in the game.

Push the button Do the quick-time commands really have to take up a third of the screen? Really? It distracts from the action like you wouldn't believe.



in the first film – but even that doesn't get much use. It seems a missed opportunity.

A low web

Maybe we're just spoiled. Maybe *Spidey 2* – which came out in 2004, let's not forget – was far enough ahead of its time that we should give this one the luxury of resting on its sticky laurels for a bit. But the fact remains that with other sandbox games pushing boundaries, not even being able to go into most of *Spider-Man 3*'s buildings grates a bit. With *God Of War 2* making every fight an all-out battle, having to scrimp for health against men with guns infuriates. But nothing's as annoying as Mary Jane. "I'm late for work, Peter!" Get the bus next time, woman.

Joel Snape

Fave Feature



"Spidey's slick swinging can still be a thrill"

PSM3 Verdict

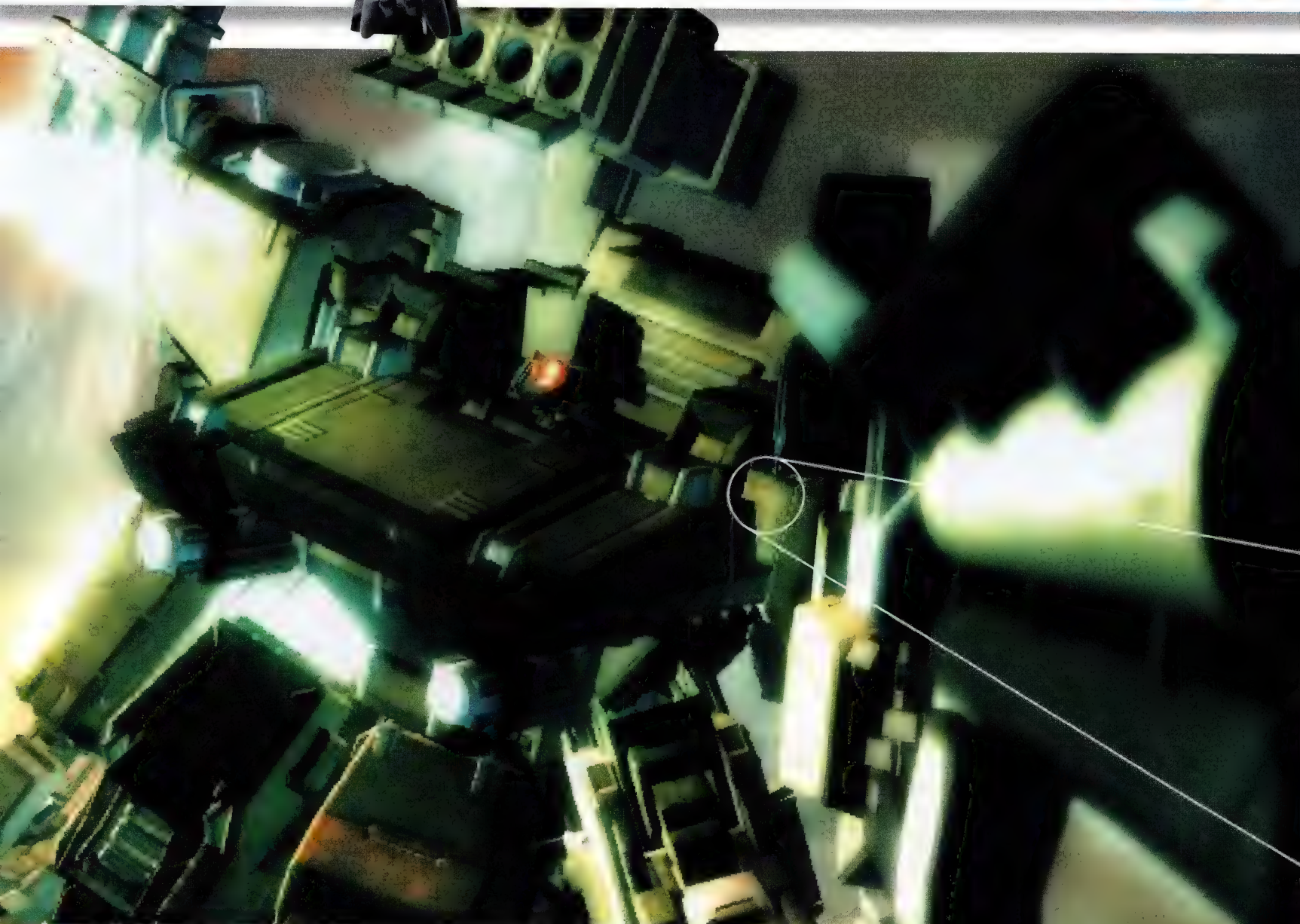


Spiderman 3 contains...

Misjudged combat | Exciting set-pieces
The ugliest characters ever

Overall A buffed-up Central Park can't distract from some upsetting gameplay blunders.

72



Armored Core 4

PS3's second big scrapping robots game is complex but oddly rewarding

KNOW IT NOW

The best *Armored Core* game yet?



The best robot game on PS3 so far?



The *Gran Turismo* of mech games?



Easy, throwaway robot fun for kiddies?



This, the latest in the series of fighting robot games, is like *Gran Turismo*. There's fun here, you just have to work *really* hard to find it. Even the customisation options are similar. Each mech has more statistics than an entire deck of Top Trumps and finding the perfect balance of defence and attack takes hours of obsessive tinkering. You can, of course, let the game do this for you, but then the game becomes just another third-person shoot-'em-up rather than the in-depth flying war robot sim it's meant to be. Not that 'sim' is really the right word, because flying war robots don't exist (yet), but a sim is what this is nonetheless. If *Zone of the Enders* is *After Burner*, *AC4* is *Microsoft Flight Simulator*. But *much* less spoddy.

The story is nonsense – even more boring than that of a Tom Clancy game – and the script consists almost entirely of baffling acronyms and stupid futuristic names. So just ignore it completely and focus on the fighting robots. The levels are impressive, ranging from bleak cities and sandstorm-lashed deserts to moonlit coastlines and vast, mountainous valleys. Objectives are varied – destroying enemy bases and armour, fighting with other Armored Core units, protecting cities from missile attacks. It's rarely dull.

Meching it difficult

But it's hard, especially if you're an AC newbie. If your mech is ill-equipped or you have the wrong combination of weapons

you'll die within minutes of entering the level, and the mission briefings are useless too and you never really know exactly what it is you're supposed to be doing. But unlike previous games in the series you can zip around the level at lightning speed using your AC's boosters, which makes it much more exciting than the likes of *Gundam*. You can strafe and fire with up to four weapons at once, one in each hand, one on each shoulder.

But by being so hard it teaches you that the most important thing in the game is the customisation, and that by setting everything to automatic you're ruining it for yourself. There's so much you can do to your mech. You can change its body parts – head, arms, legs, shoulders – and there are

Armored Core 4

"It's not for everyone. In fact, it's for hardly anyone"



Colour bars There are some really nice filtering and lighting effects. It's a very stylish game.

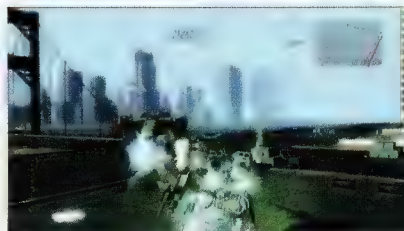


dozens of different parts to choose from. You can create some real monstrosities. But it doesn't end there. You can edit the colour of everything on your AC and apply decals, which themselves can be

designed from scratch using a clever editor reminiscent of *Ridge Racer's*. So if you want to piece together a hot pink mech with flowers all over it and take it online, you can. But it's not just aesthetic – your mech's stats can all be fiddled with, letting you focus on defence, sniping, speed and anything else you can think of.

Mech specs

Armored Core 4 isn't for everyone. In fact, it's for hardly anyone. It's for people who pore over stats and instruction manuals and for the insanely patient. But it's a really good game and the best of the series so far. If you're willing to



Logo roco

You can create emblems and stick them on your robot. You can be tasteful, like the crest above, or you could just draw a knob.



Rocket man You can switch to shoulder-mounted weapons by pressing **△** or **□**. They rule.



Fave Feature



"Boosting around at insane speeds"

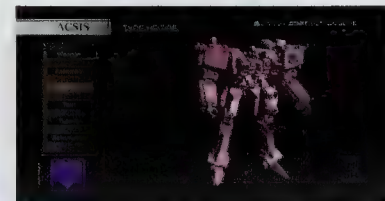
Network

Opposing forces

Some folk you're likely to meet in *AC4* online



De4thBrinGeR_666 Loves weapons. Created the biggest, manliest mech he can. American.



Cutey_PiE Flamboyant. Probably a girl. Or an incredibly camp man. Takes insults personally.



BONKERS_TED Eccentric. Loves garish colours and absurd weapons. Probably a genuine mental.



TheOctagon Ultra-efficient, statistically balanced mech. Takes the game more seriously than life.

dedicate hours to it, putting up with the sharp difficulty curve and impenetrable customisation, you'll get the most out of it. Otherwise you'll probably go back to playing *MotorStorm*.

Andy Kelly

PSM3 Verdict



Armored Core 4 contains...

Lots of robot bits to stick together | Laser swords | Flying like a cyborg Peter Pan

Overall Customisation options make this the best AC yet, but it's not very user-friendly.

77

PSM3
BUY IT



Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops

Snake's best handheld game hits Britain

KNOW IT NOW

Full free-roaming 3D camera?
Classic MGS gameplay?
Fiddly, innovative and rambling?
Easy to complete and follow?



MGS is fiddly enough at the best of times, but the PSP version requires arthritis-baiting dexterity. We didn't like *MGS3: Snake Eater* for six hours until we mastered CQC, camouflage and fine camera control, so this is highly frustrating. With no second analogue stick to constantly adjust the camera, plus the addition of PSP's small screen making proceedings cramped and claustrophobic before you even start, you need to constantly tap **△** to reset the camera behind you, lending the game a staccato feel. Or – worse still – let go of the movement (on the analogue nub) entirely, so you can adjust the camera on the D-pad.

Blind control

You *do* adjust after a few hours, but if you've never played an *MGS* game before, the controls are perversely intimidating – and that's not to mention the game's unique inner-logic, recruitment system and new hub-based play that'll unsettle even the most hardened stealth operatives.

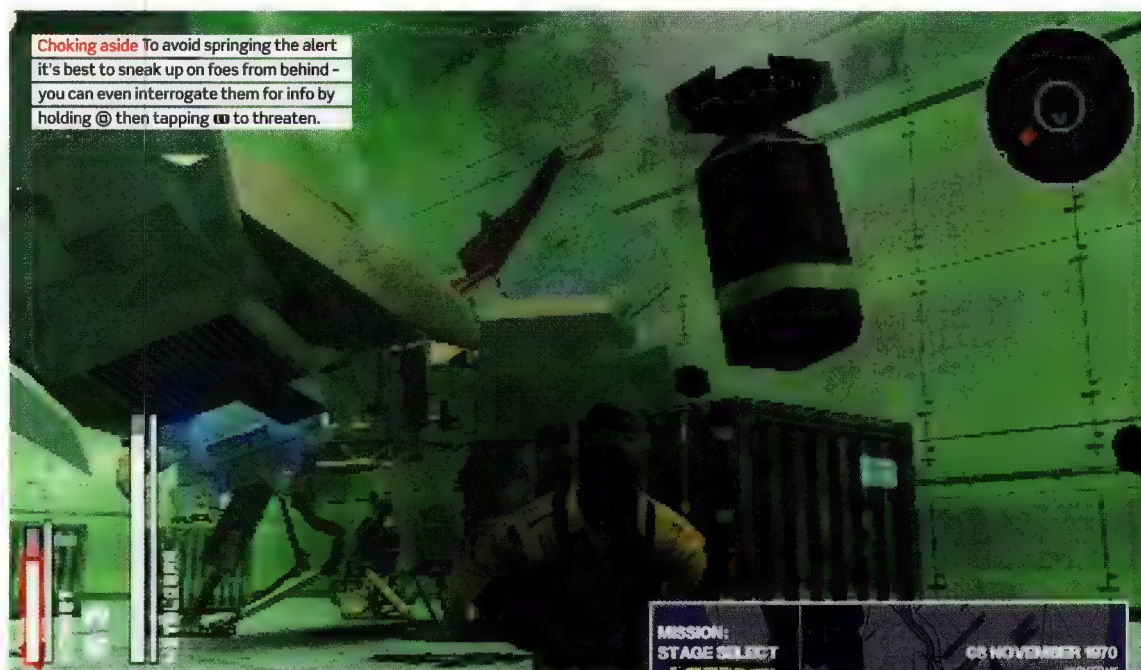
Still, you can do *anything* you can in *MGS3*, including crawling, leaping and punching; plus complex stuff such as pop-out shots from behind cover (involving an octopus-handed number of buttons), CQC, taking guards prisoner and even tapping the walls to attract attention, before sneaking up and 'holding up' guards to nick items.

There's no camouflage system – though certain team members are 'invisible' to a point in certain situations, leading to critical selection choices – and you need to hold **△** to sneak past foes undetected. There's no radar (like *MGS2*), or sonar blip (like *MGS3*), but a new sound-based detection system that shows how much noise you and the enemy are making, plus its direction and intensity. It's a versatile tool, allowing you to make great use of cover to baffle foes, and sneak up from behind.



MGS: Portable Ops

"The game never develops the flow of MGS3, excitement eroded by busywork"



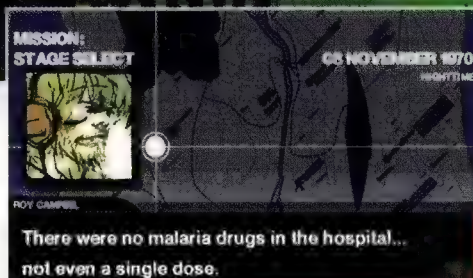
The big addition is team recruitment. Knock out a foe and you press-gang them into joining your squad. Different troops have different skills (some help stamina recovery, some help headshot accuracy, etc), lending the game a tactical feel. You could rush through each level – yes, there are levels, and a hub – killing people at will, but you forfeit the chance to recruit them. A slower approach lets you build a varied team, and makes things easier.

One step at a time

You don't play through the game in a linear, organic swoop like MGS3, but tackle levels one-by-one from a main hub/map. The theory is sound, but you end up visiting levels more than once, and sometimes you can't proceed until your Spy Units unearth new information about a location – you

sometimes hit brick walls and have to wait until your team 'unlock' the next key plot-driving objective, be that informant, secret document or weapon. As a result, the game never develops the flow of MGS3, with the excitement of key scenes eroded by busy-work. Worse, since you've only got four menu slots, you really need to know what items to take into each mission to avoid needless juggling, meaning you'll Restart or Abort time after time.

All that said, MGS: PO is one of PSP's best games. You'll delight every time you sneak past six foes to a chorus of 'Huhs?' and revel in every hard-fought boss battle. It's like eating a platter of hors d'oeuvres –

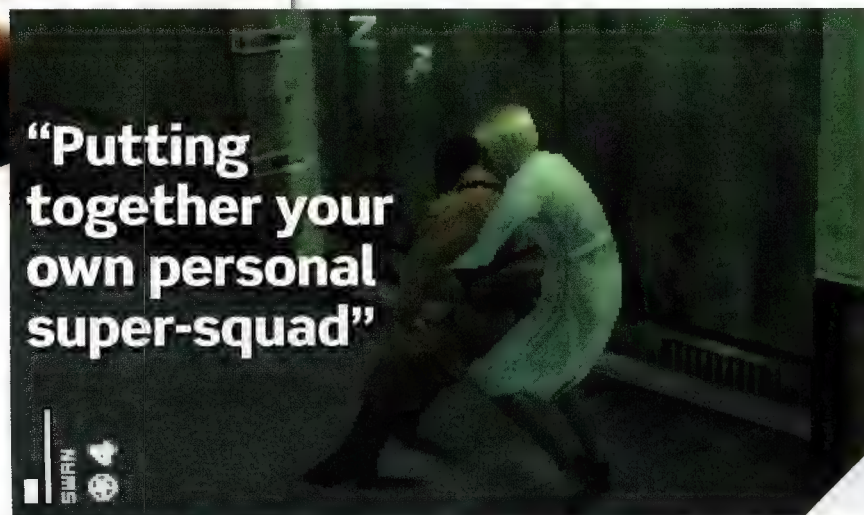


Best of British
Also new for the UK is this nice little number, ideal for when you really want to be spotted. And look like a member of the BNP.



Fave Feature

"Putting together your own personal super-squad"



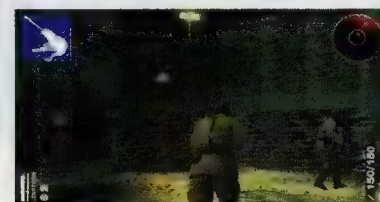
Exclusive

All new for the UK

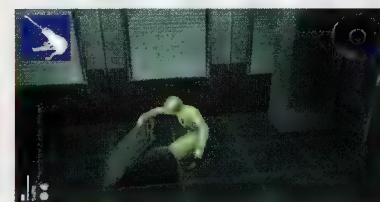
European gamers get added incentives to sneak



Snake beater The Euro version has twelve new characters to 'persuade' onto your team.



Softer, stronger Characters' traits are now more pronounced, so a balanced team is crucial.



Player Hayter There are a smattering of new maps and missions to play through...



Bad lads ...and there's the inevitable Boss Battle mode, with new recruits as a reward for success.

easy to digest, but compromised and repetitive. It's just less satisfying than a set menu of balanced textures and flavours – and that's why MGS3: Snake Eater is still Kojima's tastiest dish. **Daniel Dawkins**

PSM3 Verdict

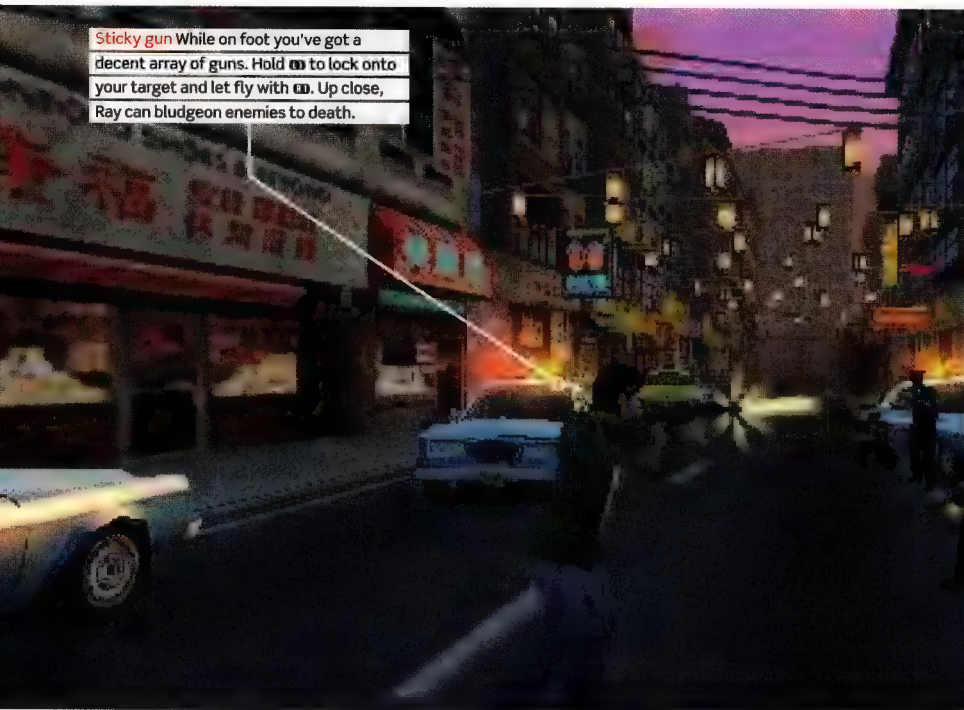


Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops contains...
Innovative recruitment | Tactical online battles
Stealth gameplay | Returning characters

Overall Right now, this is a compromised imitation of a classic, but one of the deepest, most engaging games on PSP.

83

Sticky gun While on foot you've got a decent array of guns. Hold **□** to lock onto your target and let fly with **△**. Up close, Ray can bludgeon enemies to death.



"Single to the Civic Centre, please" Learn to use the brakes or you'll be seeing a lot of crashes like this.



Driver 76

New publisher, new format, same old Driver...

Following the lead of PS2 prequel *Parallel Lines*, *Driver 76* takes its cue from the ballsy car chases of the big-collared, bell-bottomed seventies cop show, except here your platform shoes are placed firmly on the wrong side of the law. You're a criminal, Ray, who's also a badass. You can tell this as he wears a bandana, the official headwear of the badass.

The thing *Driver 76* does brilliantly is, well, driving. On foot Ray's no slouch – although shooting is a bit fiddly – but it really is all about the driving. And it needs skill – the accelerator is sensitive, so you need to use the brakes well to weave through traffic. But one of our main

problems with the game is that the training wheels never come off. As far in as the third chapter, for instance, you're told to terrify a man with high-speed driving, but rather than being given freedom to drive where you like, you're funnelled through checkpoints and onto a straight road clearly designed for this purpose and this purpose only. You're often led through tasks rather than having the chance to work out a route to success yourself.

Mission statement

Still, the missions themselves are pleasantly varied, from shooting at an angry mob while stood on the back of a

Comic relief

The game employs a comic strip for the linking 'story' sequences, which involve Ray's lusty pursuit of a tasty Chinese lady. It fits in well with the overall feel of the game.



lorry to a motorbike delivery that gets a bit like ancient racer/scrapper *Road Rash* to an inspired one where you have to nick an ambulance and deliver a defrosting heart to a dodgy backstreet surgeon. There are illegal street races too. Sadly, whenever you fail a mission, you have to sit through the explanation of what you should be doing all over again. It's like being cornered at a party by a drunk who repeats the same story constantly.

The mid-seventies are recreated brilliantly, though. New York City is sumptuously recreated and nudges PSP to its graphical limits, while the punk, funk and soul on the soundtrack is cracking – The Stranglers, Marvin Gaye, Blondie. Meanwhile, pedestrians strut around in preposterous '70s clothes. Still, it never quite nails the time period the way *Vice City* recreated the sleazy eighties. This is a more fun, colourful world with none of Rockstar's satire, full of cartoon violence and a few duff quips.

Driver 76 is a worthwhile game, then, with a lot going for it – though it's still not really up there with *GTA*. But if you're prepared to accept that, there's definitely some fun to be had here. **Jimi Famurewa**



In the Slink Slink acts as an afroed jive-talking Yoda. He lets you know the details of each job.

PSM3 Verdict



Driver 76 contains...

An ace soundtrack | Some inspired missions
Gaudy vehicles | Dizzily fast racing

Overall It doesn't do too much to suggest it's anything more than a Costcutter *GTA*, but it's a fun nostalgia-soaked affair.

72



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Hammer time The mallet is one of the most important weapons. Drive up to your rival, smack him about the bonnet, snatch the criminal and get out of there.



Calling All Cars

Fun but limited PS Network crim-catching

God Of War man David Jaffe's new game leaves behind the blood and guts of Ancient Greece in favour of simple, downloadable, multi-player fun. And in that respect, it's a real success. But in many other respects, it falls a bit short.

Calling All Cars sees up to four players in control of police cars, chasing a freshly escaped convict and competing to be the one to finally deliver him to the slammer. The jail has three doorways, offering one, two or three points depending on access difficulty. Some levels see the jail frozen over, denying a way in, (or absent altogether), so you have to get the baddie

into a paddy-wagon or helicopter instead. If someone hits you along the way, the criminal is passed to their car. Once one lawbreaker is incarcerated, another arrives. Whoever has most points after four minutes wins. If this sounds like a good idea for a game, you'd be right. It's amusing, competitive and very fast, with the cars handling like rockets – especially when you use your **RB** button for a speed boost.

Trivial pursuit

Problems? There's much more it could have offered. For instance, three weapons are fine, but why not more? Scenery is destructible, but pointless because it's so flimsy it doesn't even slow vehicles down, so it can't be used to your advantage. You can jump, but the cars are so quick your attacker can turn round and smack you before you've landed. It's often hard to see where the paddy-wagon or helicopter is because the icon blends in with the screen furniture and scenery, and it's very messy on a standard-def TV.

Rant over? Not quite. The single-player mode is also very short, but does offer a

Great escape
Quite how so many crims escape jail so quickly is a mystery. Tighter security is needed, quite clearly.

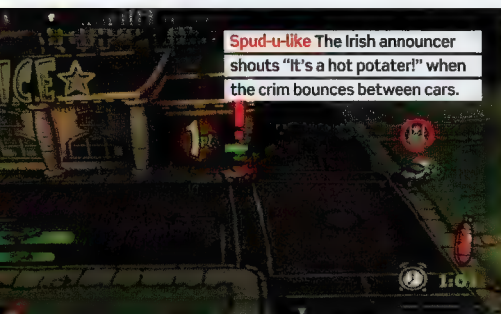


decent challenge, especially if you want to tackle the extra difficulty options and unlock all the cars. The handful of tracks could easily have been doubled, too. And the AI... well, sometimes it trashed us completely, but then other times it went for the jail even when it was frozen up.

We feel bad about pointing out all the problems, though – there's a lot to enjoy about CCC, and it's one of those multi-player games that brings out the competitiveness in everyone, leading to all sorts of shouting and swearing. And it's only six quid. But if ever a game needed extra content then it's this. **Justin Towell**



Smashing time The scenery is destructible, but has little impact on gameplay.



Spud-u-like The Irish announcer shouts "It's a hot potater!" when the crim bounces between cars.

PSM3 Verdict



Calling All Cars contains...
 An Irish announcer | Cel-shaded graphics
 Car-attracting magnets

Overall Fast and frantic, and great fun with friends. The price irons out the flaws. Get it.

78

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THE MONEY SHOT

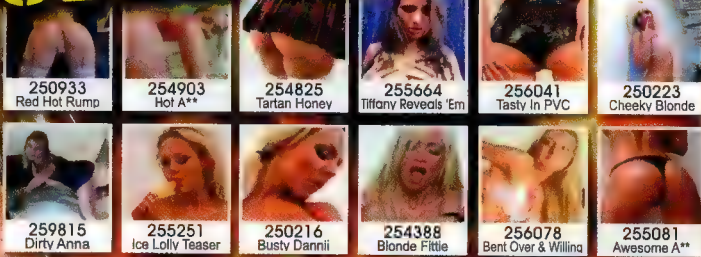
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The Game Factory | PSP | 16 May

Legend Of The Dragon

Ang about, this looks familiar



The Far East seems to hold a lot of appeal for children at the moment. The fascination for ninjas, ancient philosophy and the new breed of cartoon brought us Naruto, and now this.

Legend is a one-on-one beat-'em-up, using cel-shaded graphics to emulate the cartoon. It does a good job of that and technically it's pretty accomplished. There are destructible objects in the environment, plenty of special effects and some interesting ideas, too. The command-string special moves are a nice touch and switching into your celestial alter-ego mid-fight is satisfying, if not ever truly tactical.

However, the game falls down in a few key areas. For starters, it feels wafer-thin. Blows never feel like they really connect, so it's as if

you're simply wearing your opponent down. Also, the Story mode degenerates into random encounters with the same few characters and although the ability to upgrade your attributes with gems (read 'ability points') is commendable, it doesn't seem to make much difference. Tekken: Dark Resurrection is a more accomplished game in every way.

Fans of the TV show will enjoy this, but when your opponent says 'on guard' and not 'en garde', you wonder just how intelligent its philosophy really is. **Justin Towell**

PSM3 Verdict

Faithful for fans, low on thrills for everyone else.

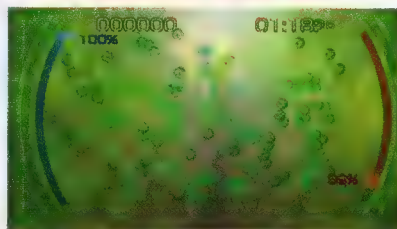
65



Sony | PS3 | Out now

Nucleus

This one squelches when you touch it



Nucleus is a top-down shooter that sees you trying to rid a body of a spreading virus. It's commendably complex and the enemy virus is ugly, but the game looks like something you shouldn't be touching. Even the music squelches. It's not a very pleasant experience and there just isn't enough fun to persuade you that you're spending your time wisely.

On the plus side, there's a massive challenge on offer, with varied levels and objectives instead of the usual 'try to get a high score'.

There are some long pauses while the game ends each run, which is annoying, but otherwise it's reasonably polished. **Justin Towell**

57

SNK | PS2 | Out now

Metal Slug Anthology

A value pack of violence



This is a side-scrolling 2D gun binge that packs in seven Metal Slug games. All you need to worry about is firing and chucking bombs with suicidal abandon, while avoiding giant missiles, swarthy-looking foreign soldiers and tanks. There's no denying that it's repetitive, but it retains its arcade-style toughness.

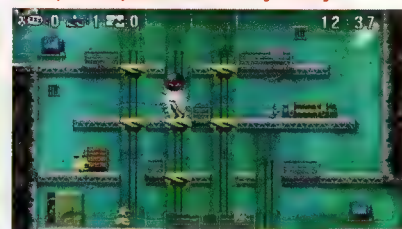
And that's the beauty of it. Ketchup-hued blood spurts everywhere and your flamethrower turns the enemy into human bacon. Graphically, it's about as advanced as Pong, but the blood-soaked fun is enough to turn the biggest pacifist into a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association. **Rachel Weber**

79

System 3 | PSP | June

Impossible Mission

Not quite impossible, but very nearly



Frustrating, basic and dated – that's Impossible Mission on PSP. This Commodore 64 'classic' has been given a slight lick of paint and nothing more.

It's a tough-as-nails puzzle/platform game where you must avoid zap-happy robots while searching puzzle pieces. Your life bar is the clock, so if you get hit, you lose time. Lose it all and you fail to stop a nuke being launched.

It's playable if you really persevere, but 23-year-old games rarely impress like they once did. The original is included here and is actually the most likeable of the three variations on offer. So give this as much of your time and money as you think a C64 game deserves. **Justin Towell**

20

Namco Bandai | PSP | Out now

Smash Court Tennis 3

New balls please

Another tennis game in time for Wimbledon mania. It's easy to bluff your way through the first few tournaments with button-bashing and luck, but sooner or later you'll need to figure out how to time shots and use your opponent's style to your advantage. Playing the repetitive mini-games and building up your skills can help with this.

Luckily, you can play simple Arcade mode, instead of the in-depth Career mode, meaning you can spend less time fiddling about with experience points and sponsorship deals. The bevy of licensed players means plenty of recognisable faces, though lumpy animation means they all look the same in-game. It's a decent enough shot at the title, but there are better tennis games already on court. **Rachel Weber**

64



PSM3 Recommends

The best games from the last few months

Tomb Raider Anniversary

Eidos | PS2

"Tight design, stunning vision and Lara back just the way we remember her. Storming, all in all. A game of grace, not violence."

PSM3 Rating **91%**

Okami

Capcom | PS2

"Quite brilliant, with substance enough to live up to its stunning visuals. Peaceful, elegant, you'll play it for hours. The most beautiful game on PS2"

PSM3 Rating **95%**

Crush

Sega | PSP

"Intelligent, inventive... Crush's main drawback is its steep learning curve. Lets you explore your own head and feel smarter and more refreshed for it."

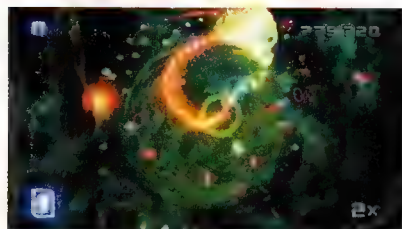
PSM3 Rating **90%**



Sony | PS3 | June 15

Super Stardust

Space: surprisingly busy, apparently



Of the two similar shooters available from the PlayStation Network this month, this is by far the most impressive. As with *Blast Factor* and Xbox 360's *Geometry Wars*, you control your ship with the left stick and fire with the right. You also get a finite number of bombs to get you out of trouble. So far, so generic. Gameplay is essentially 2D, although you're moving around a 3D planet, defending it from meteorites and aliens.

The game's biggest pull is its excellent visual quality. If you haven't got an HD TV, you really won't be getting the most from this. With only very occasional slowdown, 99% of the time you'll be awed by scores of moving objects, including flying saucers that may as well have been made by a Swiss watchmaker. It's a class act.

It can get a bit hard to see where you're going with so much happening, and progression doesn't feel as though it's entirely in your hands, but for enjoyment, sparkle and that 'one more go' factor, this is a hard one to turn down. Especially at this price. **Justin Towell**

79

505 Games | PSP | Out now

Gurumin

Like Hello Kitty. Without the cat

This is the ultimate kiddie-friendly RPG. The characters are likeable (if too saccharine-sweet at times), the graphics are colourful and interesting, and it's obviously been made with quality as a priority.

The plot revolves around a little girl named Parin, who befriends some monsters that only children can see. But then an evil prince appears and destroys the monsters' village. Guess who's gonna sort that out?

Despite the stats and hit points, it plays more like a 3D action platformer. Areas are broken into ten-minute levels, which can be revisited for a better grade whenever you like. Combat is in real-time and you can buy new moves for your weapon (a drill) with money you find, which you get from both from vanquished foes and breakable scenery.

But the music lacks the charm of the visuals, too many ideas are cheap (a crate on a switch? Again?) and backtracking to search for characters is repetitive. If its girly nature doesn't put you off, you'll have a good time. Otherwise, you'd better look elsewhere. **Justin Towell**

70



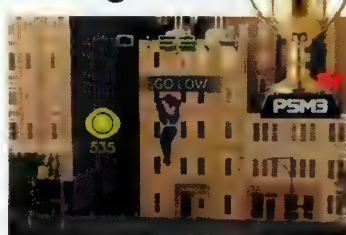
PSM3 Awards

The highlights (and lowlights) of this month's reviews

The award for **worst pirate ever** goes to... *Pirates Of The Caribbean*. Falling in the sea is presumably an occupational hazard for a pirate, so why can't Jack Sparrow swim? How can he be a decent swashbuckler without a working knowledge of the butterfly? Madness.

Sea you later "Aaarr, me hearties. I'm just going for a quick dip... aaaargh! I forgot my water wings! Help, help!"

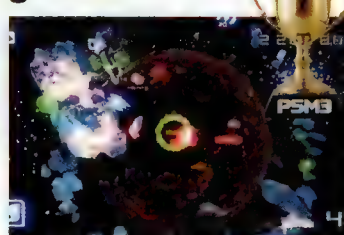
The **whiniest girlfriend** award goes to...



Spider-Man 3

Why can't Mary Jane cycle or walk like everyone else? Why does she risk exposing Peter's identity every day by making him carry her to work? Daft cow.

The **most retro** award goes to...



Super Stardust

While this issue also features a 2D scrapper and a top-down car game, *Stardust* – an asteroids clone – is officially the retroest game ever. Good, though.

Hi-Score Table

☐ MGS: Portable Ops	p78 83%
☐ Super Stardust	p85 79%
☐ Metal Slug Anthology	p84 79%
☐ Calling All Cars	p82 78%
☐ Armored Core 4	p76 77%
☐ Spider-Man 3	p72 72%
☐ Driver '76	p80 72%
☐ Gurumin	p85 70%
☐ Legend Of The Dragon	p84 65%
☐ Smash Court Tennis 3	p84 64%
☐ Nucleus	p84 57%
☐ Pirates Of The Caribbean	p66 55%
☐ Impossible Mission	p84 20%

Buyer Beware! The games they're afraid to send us

Lucinda Green's Equestrian Challenge Xplosiv

Why all these low-budget horse titles? Stick with *G1 Jockey 4*, if you must play equine sims. Fact: this game features a woman called Karin Donkers. Great name, that.

Code Of The Samurai Midas

This brings together the samurai and the police to bring you a force called – wait for it – the Samurai Police. Yeah, right.



Paddington Bear Blast

Ooh, A game about one of TV's most dull characters. He wears a hat! He carries a suitcase! He loves marmalade sarnies! A great basis for a game, we don't think.

Extended Play

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EXPLOITS
SECRETS
SECRETS
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Start



86 **The FIFA First XI**
We chart the key advances in the FIFA games since the series first hit PlayStation.



88 **The most awe-inspiring moments in God Of War 2**
Featuring lots and lots of killing. And some sex.



92 **See the greatest characters in The Simpsons Hit And Run**
Including Homer with a doughnut for a head.



94 **Smashing a man's face until it bursts in Fight Night Round 3**
Emergency plastic surgery awaits...



96 **PlayStation's darkest secrets exposed to the light**
With SOCOM 2, Castlevania and more.



96 **Feel the mud fly and the metal mangle in MotorStorm online**
Joyous racing makes us very happy indeed.



98 **Why Michigan is one of PS2's weirdest - and rudest - games**
Tying girls to pool tables - and filming them...



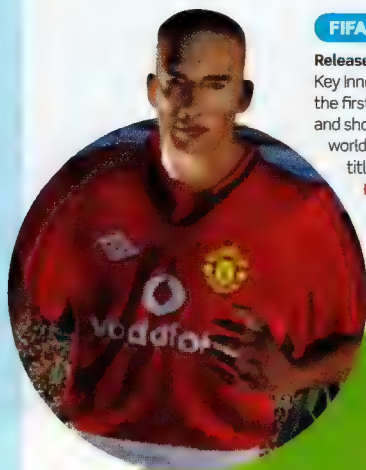
102 **Guitar Hero rocks out for a good cause**
Tony Hawk and other celebs pimp their GH controllers for charity.



PLAYSTATION CELEBRATION

The FIFA First XI

The illustrious, and much maligned, FIFA series has been going strong for over ten years, from the early days of the original PlayStation, stretching back to Sega's MegaDrive in the 1990s. Along the way, the game's evolved from a blocky isometric punt 'em up to a gloriously realised simulator packed with lifelike physics and a comprehensive line-up of real teams and players. Here's our FIFA First XI, a line-up of the landmark games in the series that introduced key advances that make FIFA the powerhouse it is today.



FIFA FOOTBALL 2002

Released: November 2001

Key Innovation(s): Power bars were included for the first time to gauge the strength of passes and shots and, unlike previous games, the world 'Football' was incorporated into the title. Not a vintage year, really.

Rating: 75%



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE '07

Released: March 2007

Key Innovation(s): This Champions League spin-off saw a new Challenge mode added, which celebrated the greatest moments in the competition's history by having the player attempt to recreate the finest comebacks from down the ages.

Rating: 79%



FIFA '97

Released: June 1996

Key Innovation(s): A real breakthrough year, this, with players now fully-fledged 3D models rather than 2D sprites. This also meant the introduction of motion-capture to the series, with the cigar-smoking, coffee-advertising Frenchman David Ginola lending his moves.

Rating: 79%

FIFA '98: ROAD TO WORLD CUP

Released: June 1997

Key Innovation(s): This World Cup tie-in featured FIFA's first player and team editor – although as the players were also actually recognisable for the first time you didn't really need it – and was the first to feature a high-profile soundtrack, starring Blur's 'Song 2'.

Rating: 84%

FIFA SOCCER '96

Released: December 1995

Key Innovation(s): This was the first FIFA to appear on PlayStation, and also the first in the series to use proper 3D stadiums. '96 also saw the first use of the licensed kits and names, which the series would become synonymous with.

Rating: 85%

FIFA 2000

Released: October 1999

Key Innovation(s): Consecutive season play, which brought all the terror and heartache of relegation and promotion battles to the fore. Port Vale were included on the request of fan Robbie Williams, who provided an exclusive song, It's Only Us, to the game in exchange.

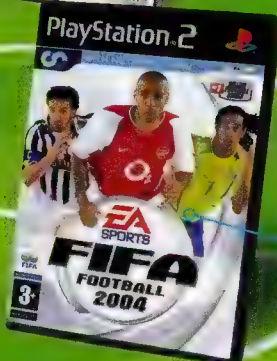
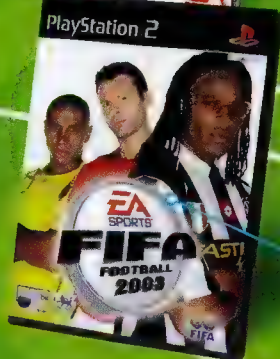
Rating: 88%

FIFA 2001

Released: November 2000

Key Innovation(s): For FIFA's first PS2 outing, EA secured the FIFpro license, which, combined with a new graphics engine, paved the way for real kits and team badges for the first time. Wowzers. It also featured animated linesmen.

Rating: 86%



FIFA FOOTBALL 2003

Release Date: October 2002

Key Innovation(s): The right analogue stick became the 'freestyle' control for step-overs and tricks, while through-balls were redesigned and 'L1' became the 'make a run you swine' button.

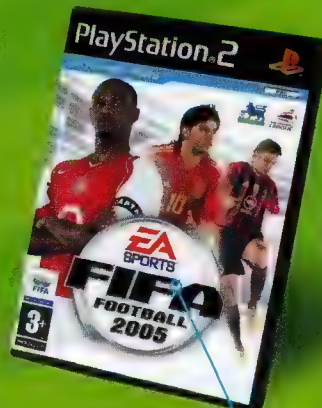
Rating: 82%

FIFA FOOTBALL 2004

Released: October 2003

Key Innovation(s): Lower divisions saw their first inclusion here, along with an 'off the ball' control system imported from EA's NBA games. This was also the first time that FIFA braved the treacherous waters of online gaming.

Rating: 89%



FIFA '07

Released: September 2006

Key Innovation(s): New ball physics brought players into the thrilling world of backspin and topspin for the first time. The crowd system was updated, with crowd noise regionalised for the first time and small pockets of away fans audible at certain grounds.

Rating: 85%



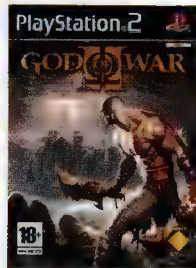
FIFA FOOTBALL 2005

Released: October 2004

Key Innovation(s): Continuing the theme of catchy but fairly useless gameplay tweaks, 2004 was all about 'first touch', where the player could use the right analogue stick to move the ball into space as he received it. This was the year PSP received its first taste of the series too.

Rating: 82%





Pub Sony
Dev Sony
FYI PS2 | 2007 | PSM86 93%
The original saw you murder Ares, the sequel ups the ante with Kratos betrayed by Zeus himself, going on the warpath and meeting Atlas, Perseus and the sisters of fate along the way. Cue Atlas is the only one who doesn't get a hook in the face by close of play.

10



most breathtaking moments in God Of War 2

Joel Snape

1 BLOWING UP THE COLOSSUS' HEAD

Killing the Rhodes Colossus is an opening even more awe-inspiring than the Hydra battle the original game plunged you into almost immediately. Even when you've scored his cheeks with your blades, gouged out his eye and cut his hand off and thrown it at him, it's not enough. The answer is to go inside him and use the Blade Of Olympus to overload his head, which goes off like a nuclear bomb. Enjoy your last taste of godly powers for a while...



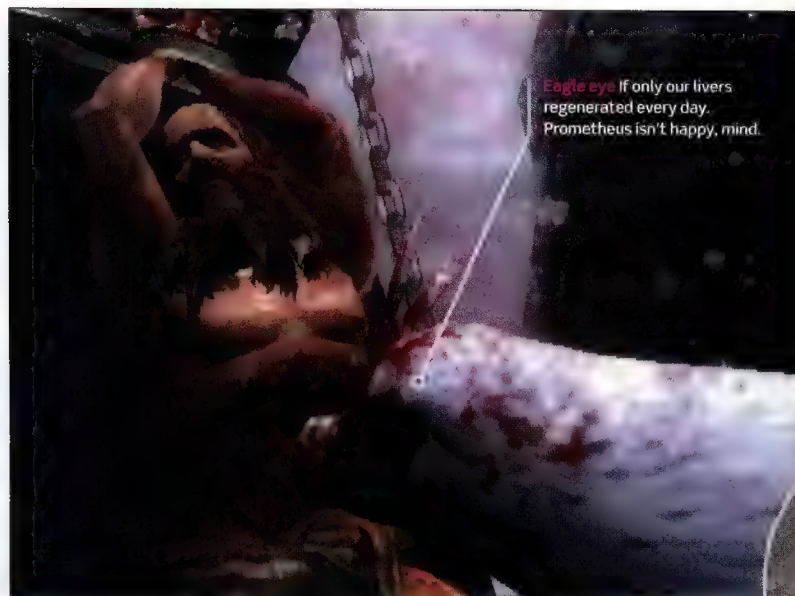
Rhodes Colossus You almost feel sorry for the big goon. But he still has to die.



Deja vu Compared to standard *God Of War*, the captain barely puts up a fight at all.

2 NOT YOU AGAIN!

Veterans of the first *God Of War* might remember the sea captain: after Kratos stole his key and kicked him into the Hydra's maw in level one, he reappeared in Hades... where Kratos beat him back into the underworld. So when Kratos's old foe the Barbarian King starts summoning zombies, *GOW*'s most long-suffering character reappears and shrieks "Not you again!" And then gets eviscerated by our hero. Genius.



Eagle eye If only our livers regenerated every day. Prometheus isn't happy, mind.

4 MEETING PROMETHEUS

According to Greek legend, Prometheus – the man who stole fire from the gods and gave it to the humans – was punished by having his liver torn out every day by a ravenous eagle. *God Of War*, obviously, doesn't skimp on showing you the whole messy business, but once it's over it's your job to release the poor chap from his torment. By killing the eagle? No: by burning him alive. Oh, the irony.

3 DE-WINGING DAEDALUS

Frizz-haired inventor of wings for men Daedalus already looks crazy, but in refusing to let Kratos mess about with destiny by going for a chat with the Fates, proves himself to be mental. He tackles you atop a cliff to stop you meddling with things you don't understand. A quick headbutting makes him change his tune, but by that time you're both over the edge. Kratos needs his wings to escape death – so it's cheerio to the inventor.



Feather fetish Yoink! The old geezer can take a surprising amount of punishment before this point.

5 HAVE SEX AS A FISH

Finish the game and you get the chance to play as Kratos in his special 'Cod Of War' fish suit. Then leap out of the swimming pool where you end up during the Colossus fight and you find these two young ladies behind a screen. A quick reaction-test later and the moans are flying, although all you get to see is a nearby statue of cupid getting 'excited'.



Wettest spot Bam! Your reward: a few extra, and a frankly disturbing climax.



6 MASSIVE SEA BEAST BATTLE

When he goes up against raging sea creature the Kraken, Kratos takes a bit of inspiration from *Shadow Of The Colossus* and climbs up its tentacles before hacking them off with the Blades Of Chaos. The poor monster tries to hang on to the columns nearby, but our hero's having none of it: he simply triggers the bridge to nearby Phoenix island, making seafood soup of the octopus's head.



Sardy of the tentacle: Kratos needs the Icarus wings to slash the Kraken in its stupid face.



Bowel please, Cratos: Stabbing people with their own weapons is sort of a recurring theme.

7 SPEARING A MAN IN THE GUTS

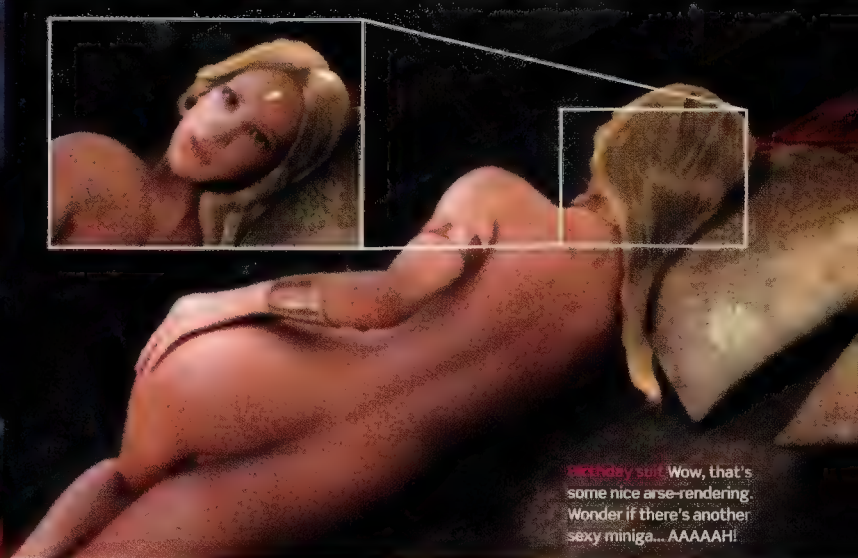
The Horse Keeper's the most annoying character in the game: a big, bearded, swaggering chump who bellows with laughter and gets minotaurs to do all his dirty work. But he's got a key that Kratos really, really needs. So when old stripeface finally knocks him off his rooftop hiding place, it's time for a gentle etiquette lesson - i.e. impaling him on his own spear and slamming his head in a door six hundred times.

8 KILLING CLOTHO

The first two sisters of fate are quite hot. The third sister? Not so much, unfortunately. Clotho's in charge of the Loom Of Destiny, and to change your past - that is, avoid getting skewered by Zeus - you'll have to persuade her to play along. And by 'persuade', we mean 'jam a gigantic metal pendulum through the side of her head'. After you've jammed spikes through her hands, of course.



Clotho ears: Clotho here needs a good killing. A giant pendulum delivers the goods admirably.



Backday suit: Wow, that's some nice arse-rendering. Wonder if there's another sexy miniga... AAAAHH!

9 SCARIEST CUT-SCENE EVER

Betrayed and killed by Zeus, Kratos goes to Hades. It's time for a quick recap of him murdering his own family, then a quick cut to a lady lying in his bed... who suddenly snaps her head around, Exorcist-style, and tells him to stop feeling sorry for himself. Way to kill the mood, love. Then it's a jump-cut to Zeus stabbing you to bits, as your little daughter barks "DON'T DIE YET!" in an evil voice. Aaaaah!

The ones we didn't pick...

1. **Choose your online**
 2. **community** (2)
 3. **Join** (2)
 4. **Share** (2)
 5. **Post** (2)
 6. **Like** (2)
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 99. **Comment** (2)
 100. **Follow** (2)

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Disagree with our choice?
Then send us your picks.
psm3@futurenet.co.uk



10

ZEUS FINALLY GETTING IT

After a colossal battle with the kingsize gods, Kratos yields - prompting Zeus to shrink him to human size so he can deliver the finishing blow. But, though, it's a trick: half a dozen quickfire punches later, you've broken both his arms, smashed his head with a rock, nailed his hands to a pillar with the Blade Of Olympus, and thrown Chaos and plunged the Blade Of Olympus into the ground. Now simply hammer © to - no joke - saw

After a colossal battle with the kingsize daddy of the gods, Kratos yields - prompting Zeus to shrink down to human size so he can deliver the finishing blow. Inevitably, though, it's a trick: half a dozen quickfire button taps later, you've broken both his arms, smashed his head into a rock, nailed his hands to a pillar with the Blades Of Chaos and plunged the Blade Of Olympus through his ribs. Now simply hammer @ to - no joke - saw his chest in half.

No ifs, no guts "Don't kill squeals Athena. We're out of other ideas, love..."

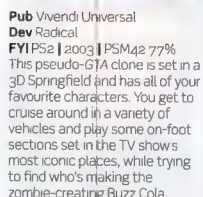


Bolt 45 Ten hours of frustration come out when you catch the big lad.

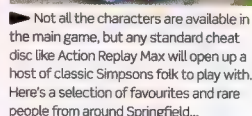


Nathan Irvine

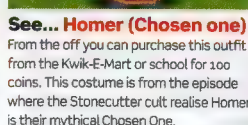
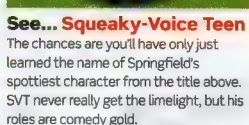
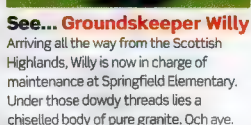
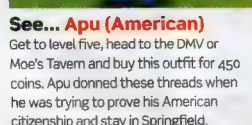
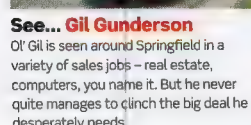
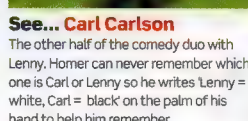
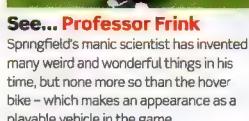
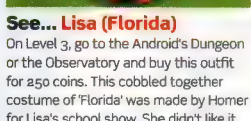
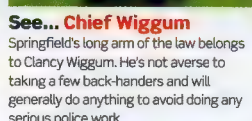
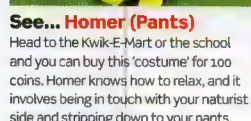
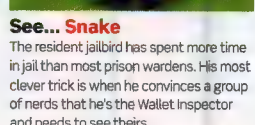
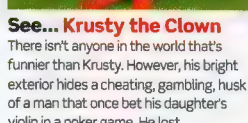
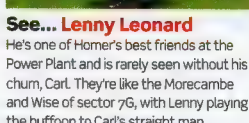
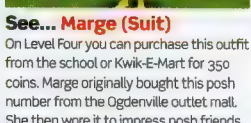
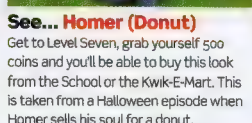
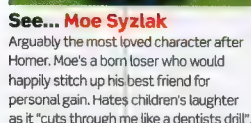
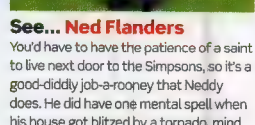
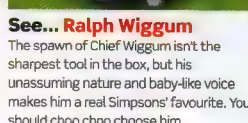
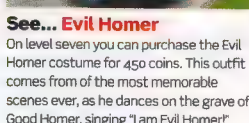
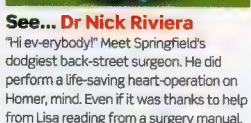
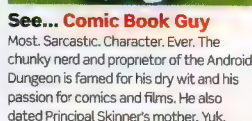
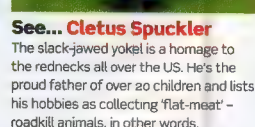
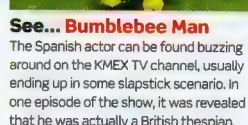
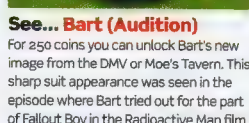
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ludicrous detail? Tell us:
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FYI PS2 | 2003 | PSM42 77%
This pseudo-GTA clone is set in a 3D Springfield and has all of your favourite characters. You get to cruise around in a variety of vehicles and play some on-foot sections set in the TV show's most iconic places, while trying to find who's making the zombie-creating Buzz Cola



See... Barney Gumble
The long-suffering alcoholic is as much a part of The Simpsons history as any of the main family. He would have been an astronaut had he not become drunk on non-alcoholic wine and stolen a jet-nark



Q I've played through the game loads and can't unlock these characters. What gives?

[illegible]

Q Are there any more characters back for the

A wide range of thermoplastic resins are available for injection molding. The most commonly used are polypropylene (PP), polycarbonate (PC), polyethylene (PE), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), polystyrene (PS), and polyvinyl chloride (PVC). The choice of resin depends on the required properties of the molded part, such as mechanical strength, chemical resistance, and cost. The resin is typically melted and then injected into a mold cavity, where it solidifies to form the desired shape.



RIDE The top five vehicles



► There are plenty of vehicles to drive you around Springfield in *The Simpsons: Hit & Run*, but a lot of them feel a bit samey. Here we list the best motors to screech around town in...



Drive... The hover bike
Professor Frink's genius creation is lightning quick and handles like a dream. Unfortunately, it's pretty weak so be careful not to crash too often.



Drive... The hearse
Mixing a great top speed with durable bodywork, the hearse is a powerhouse of a car. You can afford to slam a few vehicles off the road with this.



Drive... L'il Bandit
Snake's prized possession is the best all-rounder of the cars in the game. It's got speed, handling, precision and a tough exterior in equal measure.



Drive... Homer's prototype
OK, it's not great, but the comedy value of driving the abomination that Homer made for his brother, motor tycoon Herb, is too good to miss.



Drive... The school bus
Otto Mann's main mode of transport is as durable as they come. It takes a while to accelerate, but its top-end speed turns this into a yellow battering ram.

JUMP Find the best stunt ramps



Willy-E-Mart You'll find this jump around the back of the most famous convenience store in Springfield. There's plenty of space for a run-up and you can fly for miles.



Fire-truck Downtown, near Moe's Tavern, lies a disused fire truck – which handily, has its ladder extended like a ramp. You can get quite a run-up here, and launch yourself for miles.



Monument Head toward the centre of Springfield's shopping district and you'll come across two giant Itchy and Scratchy balloons, with a launch ramp through the central futuristic tower.



Casino By the Las Vegas-style area of town is a huge ramp. Don't go too fast as there's an invisible wall by the dock, but here is Mr Burns' casino logo (him as a mermaid) to jump through.

COMEDY Look out for random bits of humour



Willy and his pig If you walk into Springfield Elementary and hang around the first open classroom door, Groundskeeper Willy will walk by, stroking his pet pig, Odd.



One dead actor At the Android's Dungeon, if you hit **△** next to the robot in the corner, it'll flail its arms wildly before its chest plate opens to reveal the skeleton of a small, dead actor.



The Seven Duffs There's a poster in Moe's Tavern that changes to display each of the seven Duffs – like the seven dwarves, but for beer. They're the star attraction in theme park, Duff Gardens.

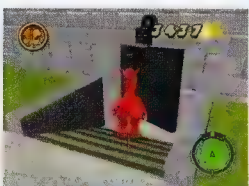


Moleman at the DMV Hans Moleman – he always seems to end up being hurt, blown up or humiliated in some way. At the DMV, press **△** near the camera and you'll blind him with the flash.

HIDDEN Check out the show references



► There are tons of references to the show to be found in *The Simpsons: Hit & Run*, even if you're not avidly searching for them. Here's a list of our favourite ones. You'll probably recognise them.



Find... Flander's shelter
From the episode in which Bart spots a comet heading towards the city and the whole of Springfield tried to pile into Ned's bomb shelter.



Find... Gas release valve
When Homer bulks up so he can work from home in his muu-muu (a garment like a big tent), he has to dash here to vent gas and prevent an ex-plo-sion.



Find... The CATapult
Homer's brief stint as a beer baron lands him in trouble and risks him being catapulted out of town. They test a cat to make sure it works, as you see here.



Find... The tyre fire
The burning smell of rubber is synonymous with the town of Springfield. It's located down by the trailer-park district if you so wish to visit it.



Find... Tomacco plants
When the family move to a farm to avoid Homer being shot, they accidentally create a tomato/tobacco hybrid that gets people addicted to its taste. Yes.

CODES The five best cheats



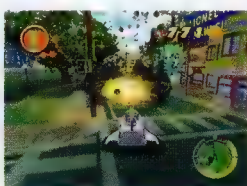
► There are quite a few cheats, but to unlock them you'll need to complete the game once – then you'll be able to access them from the Options menu at any time during the game.



Try... The jumping car
Hold **△** and **□** and press **○**, **△**, **△** and **△** and you'll unlock the ability to turn your vehicle into a kangaroo. Just jab **L3** and your car will leap into the air.



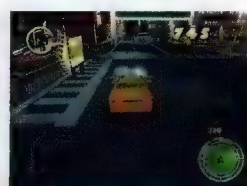
Try... Grid mode
Hold **△** and **□** and press **○**, **△**, **△** and **△** and you'll unlock grid-line mode. It's not particularly useful, but it's cool to see where the animators lock images.



Try... Blowing up cars
Hold **△** and **□** and press **△**, **△**, **△** and **△** and you'll unlock this explosive mode. Rather than swerving past other cars, you can smash through them with ease.



Try... Drunk driving
Hold **△** and **□** and press **△**, **△**, **△** and **△** and you'll unlock blurry vision. We can't condone drink-driving but this motion blur does add a new level of fun.



Try... Speedometer
Hold **△** and **□** and press **○**, **△**, **△** and **△** and you'll unlock a speed indicator. A little dial will appear over the radar, but it's not clear whether it's mph or kmh.

PLAYSTATION SECRETS

Pounding an opponent into a bloody mess in **Fight Night 3**

"The skin pulls apart like fleshy curtains"

Scar tissue

There's nothing more satisfying in *Fight Night Round 3* than watching your foe slumped onto his corner stool looking like he's been hit with a sack of rocks. After all your training and time spent perfecting haymakers, this is your reward. Swing after deadly swing stuns your opponent until his face swells up like the Elephant Man and the skin pulls apart like tiny fleshy curtains. There's sadistic pleasure in wrecking his face with jabs rather than just knocking him out.

1 Feeling fine



Who's a pretty Roy? Early on in the bout, Roy Jones Jr. looks good enough to kiss. Yes. His furrowed brow and dark mysterious eyes are the only signs that this cool customer is staring the biggest beating of his life square in the face.

2 Looking swell



Eye can't take it After a few more exchanges with Smokin' Joe Frazier, Roy starts to look a little worse for wear. Still, the left side of his face is intact and he's maintaining a snarl that would suggest a little more facial rearrangement is in order.

3 That's gotta hurt

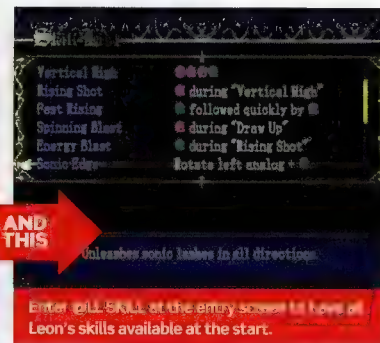
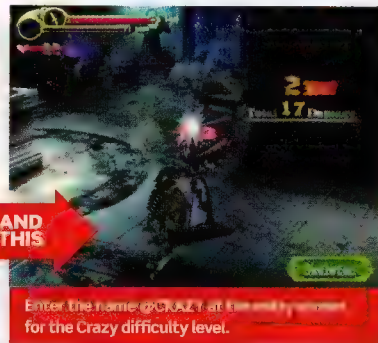
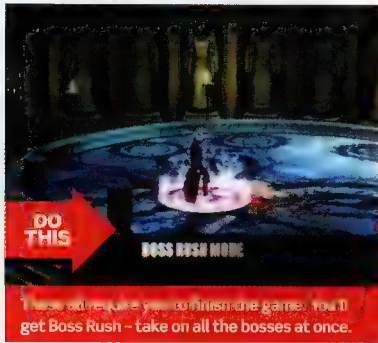


Spirit's all over The furious pummeling from Frazier's hits of fury are too much for Jones Jr. His eyes are so puffed up he can barely see, and the sheer pain and face covered in blood makes Roy wonder why he ever agreed to this fight in the first place. Ouch.

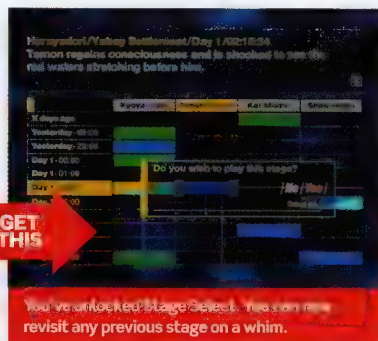
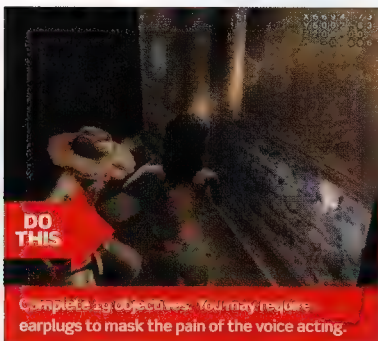


PlayStation's best kept secrets uncovered every month

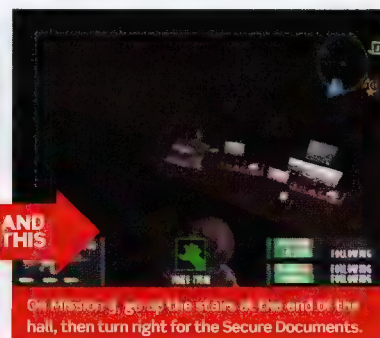
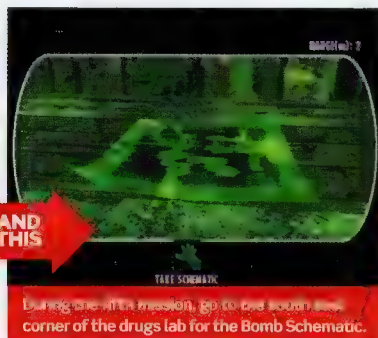
Hidden bits > **Castlevania: Lament Of Innocence** > Extra modes



Scary stuff > **Forbidden Siren** > Horror movie

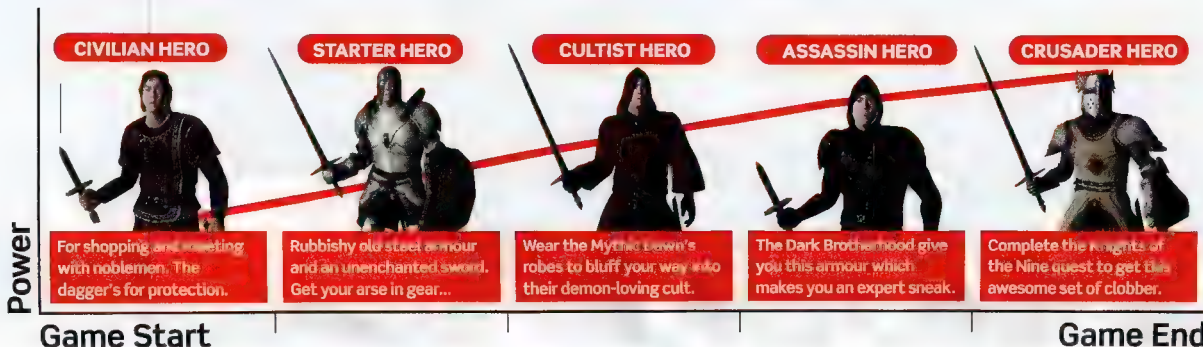


Extras > **SOCOM 2** > Hidden objectives completed



From zero to hero in... **Oblivion**

There are thousands of looks to rock in *Oblivion*. Here's our personal fashion journey...



The Top 5

Cheats you must know



1 Rogue Galaxy

Unlock all costumes

Successfully complete the game and save when prompted. Then while starting a new game at the main menu, hold **LB** to have all previously unlocked costumes available.

2 Virtua Tennis 3

Frying Pan racket

Get three strikes in a row in the Pin Crusher mini-game to unlock the Frying Pan racket.



3 Blazing Angels

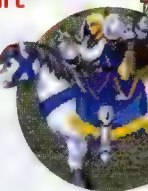
All campaign missions and planes

At the main menu, hold **LB** + **RB** and quickly press **△**, **□**, **△** (2), **□**, **△**, **□** to unlock all campaign missions and planes.

4 Capcom Classics Vol 2

All cheats and art unlocked

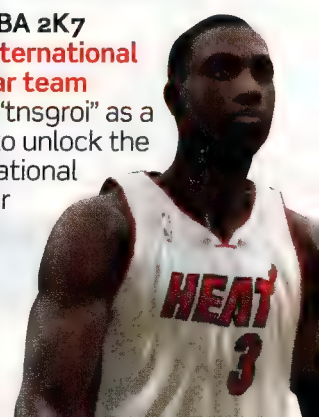
At the title screen, press **←**, **→**, **↑**, **↓**, **□**, **□**, **□**, **□**. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.



5 NBA 2K7

International All-star team

Enter "tmsgroi" as a code to unlock the International All-star team.





Smash your way to first place in **MotorStorm** online

Andy Kelly



Pub Sony
Dev Evolution Studios
FYI PS3 | 2007 | PSM86 88%
Tough, dynamic racing and a busting thriller that makes good on PS3's promises. Single player mode is lengthy and difficult, but online adds a whole new dimension to play when you realise just how aggressive people can be. One of PS3's finest launch titles.

In single player, *MotorStorm*'s AI is aggressive. It angrily knocks you about, nudges you into obstacles and sends you hurtling over the sides of cliffs. And you're only racing unthinking robots blindly following strings of code. When you play online you're racing against real people. And people are *bastards*. And these particular bastards will stop at nothing to batter you off the course and, if you have a headset, you'll be treated to a slew of swears at every turn. But it gives every race a sense of urgency - you'll do anything to beat this lot.

Nice guys finish last

But you'll probably come last because it's incredibly difficult. As is the case with most online games, everyone else seems

to be infinitely better than you. You'd better get used to eating dirt. But no matter how good you are, everyone's at the mercy of the game's exemplary physics. Our tactic was to pin down the leader and hound him mercilessly. Eventually he'd crack under the pressure, make a mistake and we'd skid off into the lead. Well, for about three seconds until he came rolling up behind us and returned the favour. Right up our exhaust pipe.

There are some problems with lag from time to time, most noticeably when a car goes off a ramp - sometimes it'll flicker and disappear, before appearing on the track below. There are other similar graphical anomalies, but nothing that affects gameplay too seriously. Your main worry will be getting better at racing.

Your opponents, depending on how hardcore they are, will know each of the courses inside out, so you're better off learning them in single player before even attempting to take yourself on the net.

MotorStorm online is constantly being updated via downloadable patches. In fact, the most recent update fixes the boosting glitch we explain over the page, makes the lobby screens clearer, lets you turn player names off, and sorts out a load of flaws. But it won't fix everything. Online play is always evolving.

ONLINE VERDICT

Lots of players? A few hundred at peak times, which isn't that many.
Buy it just for online? Probably not. Single player is still the best.





GAMEPLAY Defining moment

MotorStorm really comes into its own when you're in the midst of a massive group of other racers on a full server. The ensuing chaos is nightmarish and you'll most likely end up on your battered metal arse.



You're in the chaos

You only find yourself jostling among the group at the start of the race, which is a shame. The rest of the time the pack seems to be very spread out.

Tag team

Players' names are shown above their motors in garish colours. You can turn this off by pressing the **11** button if you find them too distracting, however

Boost is required

Choosing a vehicle is just as important as driving well. And consider the track's surface as well. For dustier courses, we suggest using buggies.

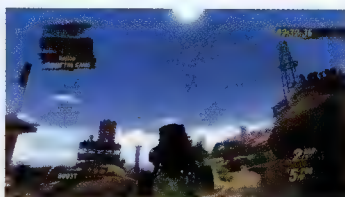
SKILLS Online tactics

There are a lot of dirty cheaters on *MotorStorm* online, but also a lot of honest racers who are just damn good at it. Here are some tactics you can use to make you better, and how to spot a cheater...



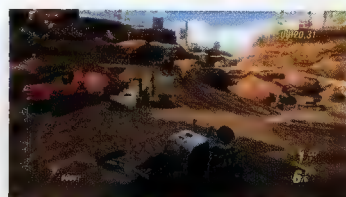
1 Road rage

To survive on the rugged roads of *MotorStorm* you have to be a complete swine. Like the guy above, who rammed into us. He hit just the right spot and it sent us into a complete 360 degree spin. People in big rigs and racing trucks seem to be the worst and will make a point of running over anyone they see on a bike, just to get a few seconds ahead of the pack. But those are the breaks and you have to get used to it, or you'll regularly be left behind in a cloud of dust.



2 Cheaters

There's a glitch that lets you have infinite boost. We won't say how to do it (because it's naughty), but it involves repeatedly tapping the **X** button. People also complain about the amount of speed people seem to get on Rock Hopper. "The track is full of quirks. Sometimes your car will shoot straight up and land upside down after a jump," explains veteran player Snooptalian. The new update fixes the boost glitch, but the cheaters will find a way around it. They always do.



3 Exploder

There's a dirty, risky tactic that lets you explode your car and send the carcass soaring over the finishing line, gaining you a few extra settings. You have to know exactly when to start boosting before the chequered flag so that you overheat and blow up at just the right time. This is for real experts only, however, and chances are you'll get the trajectory wrong and bash into the side of the track rather than sail majestically across the finish. It's fun to try, though.

JOIN Server system



First, choose your language. If you fancy knocking some Frenchmen about you can, but you'll probably stick with English speakers.



Choose a game session. You can create and name your own too. Some lovely fella here has called his 'No Blacks, Please'. What a cretin.



When you're in, wait for the current race to end, choose your car, wait for the others to pick theirs and then the fun begins.

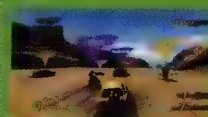
Online highlights

Race Report



1

Choose a few cars and lines up at the starting line. The race begins with a green flag and a burst of speed.



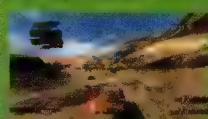
2

Watch out for other racers. They may be trying to bump you off the track or just trying to win.



3

Choose a vehicle that is good for the track. For example, a truck is good for a dirt track.



4

Watch out for other racers. They may be trying to bump you off the track or just trying to win.



5

Choose a vehicle that is good for the track. For example, a truck is good for a dirt track.

Harshest insult

"Stop bumpin' into my truck, dickwad!"

Community service

There's a lot of online players who are just damn good at it. Here are some tactics you can use to make you better, and how to spot a cheater...

Ask the experts

MotorStorm's most hardcore players hang out at the game's official forum, discussing tactics, track

techniques and glitches. If you want inside info to help you get better, register over at <http://tinyurl.com/23vmpg>.





Snuff, horror and porn, all at once. Welcome to **Michigan**

Duncan Harris



Pub 505 Game Street
Dev Grasshopper Manufacture
FYI: PS2 | 2005
You're not in front of the camera in this survival horror, you're behind it, directing the action.

The set-up for *Michigan* is straightforward enough. Chicago has been overrun by the forces of evil and, as an employee of Zaka TV news, it's your job to get the scoop. Other news crews have gone missing, the streets are deserted and a thick fog has fallen... *indoors*. Stranger still, the game's makers have called this place Chicago, Michigan rather than the other way round.

But here's the trick: throughout the game you're just a cameraman, limited to seeing everything that happens through a lens. You can look but never touch, listen but never speak, and go almost nowhere without your glam female reporter leading the way. Beyond basic movement your

actions consist solely of zoom, ram (with the camera) and focus, the time limit for each level being the amount of blank tape you have left. By focusing on an item such as a doorknob or piece of paper you can instruct the reporter to interact with it, but so long as vital clues remain hidden in a particular room she'll refuse to go anywhere else.

It's a great way to frame a survival horror, always narrowing your field of view and depriving you of spatial awareness. There's no way to peek around the next corner as you might in a third-person game, you just have to thrust your camera into the unknown and accept that when something decides to go "Bleh!" you might have to poop your undies. The only way you can shoot in *Michigan* is to focus on a hostile

target, which prompts the reporter to take on the task for you.

Post-watershed

But ask yourself: is that what you actually want? Given that this innocent girl will do nothing but scream without your say-so, would it not make better TV if you just stepped back, zoomed in and watched as a zombie with a mouth in place of its genitals devoured her from the legs up? Click. You've just switched over to Channel Suda 51.

If you don't know who Suda is (real name Goichi Suda, *Michigan*'s chief designer) you should know his work. Soon after this game's debut, his real opus, the wrist-slashing, suicide-bombing *Killer7*, shook



The defining moment...

Got morals?

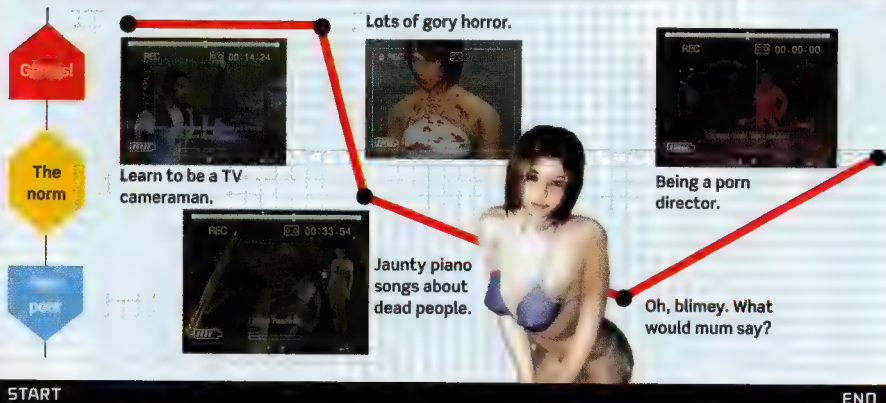


GameAmmo

"In *Killer7*, you'll see Garcian Smith watch *Michigan*'s Zaka TV"



The Michigan thrill-o-graph



moment, filming a captive woman from every angle as she's shackled, arms and legs akimbo, to a boob-trapped pool table. Whether you help is entirely up to you, though all signs point to the game preferring that you *didn't*. But should a reporter die during a mission you'll simply skip to the next one, with points added for your footage and a new girl holding the mic.

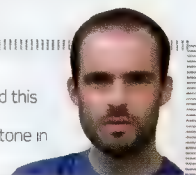
My kind of town

Whether *Michigan* amounts to a decent game is almost irrelevant by the time it's all over. It's a lot like *Killer7* in that sense, being a game of attitude and shock value over substance and challenge.

The voice acting is truly dreadful, the scraps of additional story found in various notebooks and computers amount to nothing, the animations are airy-fairy and, worst of all, the teams you're saddled with are as mad as a box of frogs. When the world around you makes little sense, questions of ethics feel irrelevant. *Michigan* doesn't particularly work, then, but the important thing is that it exists. It rocks the boat, reminds us that games can subvert as well as offend, and has some truly mischievous fun on the way.

CLASSIC VERDICT

Why now? Gaming needs its oddballs and this one is becoming a rarity.
Final thought An oddly misshapen milestone in the creepy voyeurism genre



The Top 5

Michigan facts

① **Thai'd up** Taiwanese model Yinling didn't just promote *Michigan* in Japan – she was an unlockable character with a bonus mission to play. She's cut from the UK version, however.

② **Killer sounds** Much like *Killer7*, *Michigan*'s sound effects bank is an aggressive, unpredictable one. Even the pause button makes its own surreal twang.

③ **Buggy boy** A bug in the UK version means you can't access the Movie Theater bonus – the menu option doesn't work.

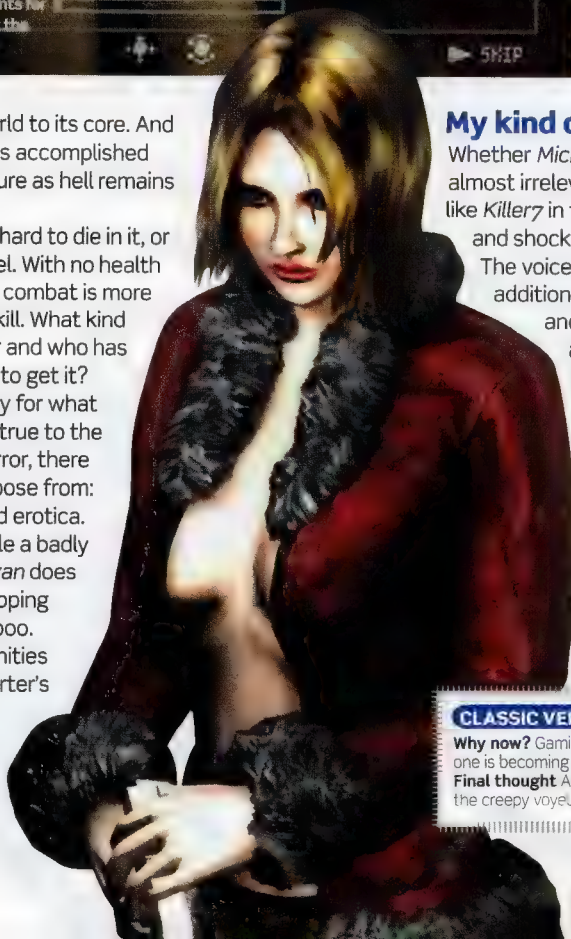
④ **Power lines** The battery gauge on your camera hints at how much of the game you've completed. The emptier it is the further through you are.

⑤ **Man alive** Not all of *Michigan*'s reporters are female. If you've managed to lose enough girls, the last in line is a guy called Mark.

the action adventure world to its core. And while *Michigan*'s a far less accomplished experience all round, it sure as hell remains a Suda 51 game.

First, it's actually very hard to die in it, or ever have to replay a level. With no health bar or ammo counter, its combat is more a test of morality than skill. What kind of footage will you go for and who has to suffer in order for you to get it? Points are awarded purely for what you capture on film and, true to the essence of Japanese horror, there are three subjects to choose from: suspense, immorality and erotica.

It may visually resemble a badly flushed toilet, but *Michigan* does boast some truly eye-popping moments of 18-rated taboo. Specific scoring opportunities include looking up a reporter's skirt from a crouched position, showing an unhealthy interest in mutilated corpses and, in one standout



PLAYSTATION
NATION

Guitar Hero plays best ever charity gig

Charity rocks - officially. A recent eBay auction saw 32 Guitar Hero controllers - customised by various celebrities - go under the hammer. Entitled Rock, Paint, Bid, the proceeds went to MusicCares, a charity which assists those in music struggling financially, or who have drug or alcohol problems.

The list of 'celebrities' was a bit odd, though. Tony Hawk and Jack Black? Yep, we get that. Pretentious style mag Vice? Well, OK. Meg and Dia? Josh Hoyer? Cary Hart? No, us neither. (But, in order: two sisters on the TMNT soundtrack, a pro surfer and a Motocross rider.) Most intriguing, mind, was Sureshot. We thought Sureshot was a Transformer, but he turns out to be a DJ. Bah. Transformers playing *Guitar Hero*? Now that's the kind of party we'd like to be invited to.

Totals? Andy's fave band My Chemical Romance got a massive \$950, dwarfing the \$291 brought in by Tony Hawk. Even rockers Nickelback did better, getting \$325 for their guitar, although all they did was sign their name on it - thus demonstrating the originality evident in their music. And the final score? \$6944.18 - that's £3644.22. Well done to all concerned. Even Nickelback.

"My Chemical Romance dwarfed the cash raised by Tony Hawk"

GameAmmo

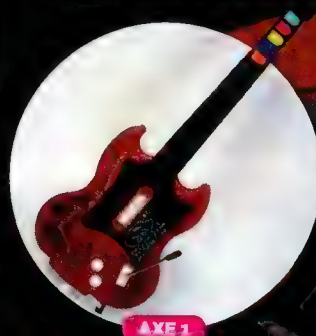
"Baseballer Joel Zumaya, of Detroit Tigers, did his hand in playing GH"



AXE MANIACS

Which celeb? Which guitar? *You decide*

It's puzzle time. Can you match the guitar to the famous person or persons who designed them? Yes, it's just like one of those 50p puzzle mags the old people sometimes buy, but *much* cooler. Hold the foot of the page up to a mirror to read the answers.



AXE 1



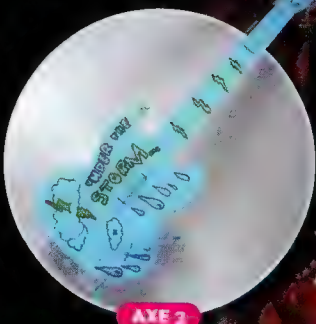
MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE



AXE 2



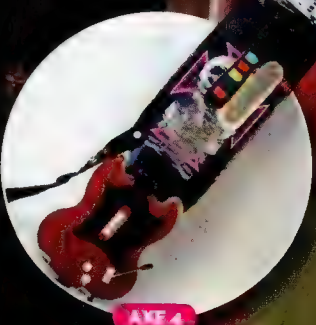
TONY HAWK



AXE 3



TENACIOUS D



AXE 4



HOT HOT HEAT

Answers: Axe 1 belongs to Tenacious D. Axe 2 is from My Chemical Romance. Axe 3 is by indie rockers Hot Hot Heat and Axe 4 is Tony Hawk. It's striped like a skateboard, but plain.

PS2 Playlist

FIRST CHOICE

SECOND CHOICE

THIRD CHOICE

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2

Pub EA | Dev EA | Web easports.com

"We're treated to a host of (almost) living, breathing and bleeding boxers. Looks superb."

PSM3 Rating 89%



87%

VIRTUA TENNIS 2

Pub Acclaim | Dev Sega | Web sega.com

"Far from perfect, but combines utterly addictive arcade action with sim-like depth. Simply smashing."

PSM3 Rating 88%



78%

85%

70%

EVERYBODY'S GOLF

Pub SCEE | Dev Sony
Web playstation.com

"While never hugely difficult, it's all so warm and relaxing that it doesn't really matter much."

PSM3 Rating 87%



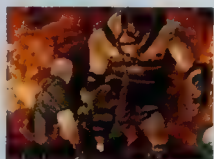
80%

RESIDENT EVIL 4

Pub Capcom | Dev Capcom | Web capcom.com/resevil4

"Every second of play feels polished to perfection, like a game that's been playtested for hours on end."

PSM3 Rating 97%



84%

THE SILENT HILL COLLECTION

Pub Konami | Dev Konami
Web silenthillheaven.com

"Hours of quality adventuring and, if you're after scares, there's nothing else quite like it."

PSM3 Rating 89%



81%

COLD FEAR

Pub Ubisoft | Dev Darkworks
Web coldfeargame.com

"Waves tear over the side of the ship, splattering the camera. It looks magnificent."

PSM3 Rating 83%



86%

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE

Pub Konami | Dev Konami
Web konami.com

"One of the best games ever, with excellent online options."

PSM3 Rating 93%



70%

SOCOM 2: US NAVY SEALS

Pub SCEA | Dev Zipper | Web socom2.playstation.com

"SOCOM 2 is immersive, dramatic, exciting, detailed and absolutely worth hooking your PS2 up to broadband for."

PSM3 Rating 92%



90%

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6

Pub Konami | Dev Konami | Web pesfan.com

"Eminently playable, ridiculously detailed, horribly addictive, and even better than the real thing."

PSM3 Rating 91%



80%

GUITAR HERO 2

Pub Red Octane | Dev Red Octane | Web guitarherogame.com

"Addresses every criticism and packs in a load of new stuff. A masterclass in sequel-making. Get it."

PSM3 Rating 92%



81%

SINGSTAR

Pub Sony | Dev Sony | Web singstargame.com

"A bit of a duffer alone, with friends it's possibly the best game ever. Classy and genuinely groundbreaking."

PSM3 Rating 90%



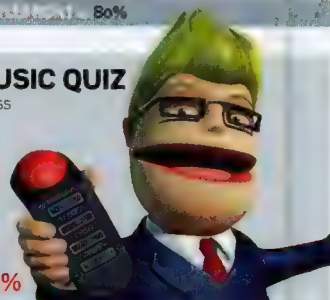
85%

BUZZ: THE MUSIC QUIZ

Pub Sony | Dev Relentless
Web playstation.com

"A brilliant idea. Loads of questions and a truly inspired peripheral."

PSM3 Rating 84%



84%

80%

Crash course The bandicoot's key PS2 outings

GET ANGRY

Crash: The Wrath Of Cortex

Pub Sierra | Dev Traveller's Tales
Web wrathofcortex.com

This was the first Crash game to arrive on PS2. Some people were probably excited by his arrival on the fledgling machine. Others found his bland platforming and apple collecting a bit, well, bland.

PSM3 Rating 66%



DUAL SHOCK

Crash Twinsanity

Pub Sierra | Dev Traveller's Tales
Web twinsanity.crashbandicoot.com

In which - shock - Crash teams up with his arch nemesis, Neo Cortex, and swings him about to use him as a weapon. The rest of the game remains more or less the same, though - humdrum platforming disguised by nice visual polish.

PSM3 Rating 49%



KART DECO

Crash Tag Team Racing

Pub Sierra | Dev Radical
Web ttr.crashbandicoot.com

Crash goes all Mario Kart on our collective asses, and - remarkably - pulls off quite a good game. Two characters to a kart, nice weapons, good tracks and an entertaining platforming hub. Well done, Crash.

PSM3 Rating 74%



@ Disagree with our choices? Write us an explosive email telling us why we're complete idiots. Job your word bombs at: ps3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject Line: "WRONG!"



Back Issues

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Why didn't anyone buy...?

They released it - No-one bought it. We explain



Firefighter F.D. 18

Pub Konami | Dev Konami | Web konami.com

Nobody bought this because it sounds like the kind of thing your little brother would be into. When you're a kid, working for the emergency services seems brilliant, but then you become a teenager and realise that you'd much rather be a rock star. *Firefighter F.D. 18* is an obscure third-person action game released by Konami where fire is, quite literally, your enemy. The flames take on humanoid shapes and you have to squirt them into watery oblivion with your hosepipe, all the while dodging leaky gas pipes, exploding cars and devastatingly powerful backdrafts. Like in that film, *Backdraft*.

And it's really exciting. In some missions, you have to rescue trapped civilians. Fail and you're forced to watch a cut-scene of them burning to death in jarring slow motion. Then there's the bosses - enormous, inexplicable fire monsters that swirl around the level chucking fireballs and trying to burn you. But the best thing about *Firefighter* was how realistic it was. Not the humanoid fire or the bosses obviously, but the fact that it was set in a modern city with news report-style cut-scenes. It felt oddly real, which made every rescue attempt seem important.

FF18 should have done well, but Konami didn't push it - maybe they thought firefighting wasn't as 'aspirational' as dying on wartime battlefields. Cross your fingers for a PS3 version. Don't expect to uncross them any time soon, though.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want to champion a game here? Let us know
psm3@futurenet.co.uk



PlayStation 3 Top 20

This month's big retail winners and losers

01 (01) **MotorStorm**

Sony Reviewed PSM86 88%

02 (02) **Resistance: Fall Of Man**

Sony Reviewed PSM86 89%

03 **NEW F.E.A.R.**

Sierra Reviewed PSM86 72%

04 (03) **Formula 1 Championship Edition**

Sony Reviewed PSM86 50%

05 (05) **Virtua Tennis 3**

Sega Reviewed PSM86 85%

06 (04) **Call Of Duty 3**

Activision Reviewed PSM86 82%

07 (06) **Fight Night Round 3**

EA Reviewed PSM86 78%

08 (07) **Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07**

EA Reviewed PSM86 81%

09 (09) **Virtua Fighter 5**

Sega Reviewed PSM86 87%

10 **NEW The Godfather: Don's Edition**

EA Reviewed PSM86 66%

11 (08) **Ridge Racer 7**

Sony Reviewed PSM86 79%

12 (10) **Need For Speed Carbon**

EA Reviewed PSM86 58%

13 (11) **Def Jam Icon**

EA Reviewed PSM86 49%

14 (12) **Sonic The Hedgehog**

Sega Reviewed PSM86 47%

15 (14) **Marvel Ultimate Alliance**

Activision Reviewed PSM86 72%

16 (10) **Blazing Angels**

Ubisoft Reviewed PSM86 52%

17 (20) **NBA Street Homecourt**

EA Reviewed PSM87 80%

18 (16) **Genji: Days Of The Blade**

Sony Reviewed PSM86 60%

19 (15) **Full Auto 2**

Sega Reviewed PSM86 36%

20 (17) **Tony Hawk's Project 8**

Activision Reviewed PSM86 80%



Want it?
Tick it!



Don't feel the F.E.A.R.

The highest of this month's new entries is the rather 'meh' *F.E.A.R.* We'd advise you stop buying this, and get more pads for multi-player *Resistance* instead.



Don and dusted

It's *Don's Edition*. We're not sure who Don is or why he got his own version of *The Godfather* but, if we're honest, he's welcome to it.



Angels of darkness

All the good games are up at the top end of the charts. Down here, it's the likes of *Blazing Angels* - a mediocre plane game you should ignore. So do it.

1,000,000

The number of Blu-ray movie discs now sold in the States since the launch of the format last year.

You're playing...



Andy Knight
His nickname is 'The Superstar' apparently. Hmm...

- 1 **Smackdown 2007** "Despite minor glitches, it's still extremely fun to beat the pudding outta John Cena."
- 2 **Guitar Hero** "It has a Bowie song. Now how cool is that?"
- 3 **Tekken 5** "The most fun I've ever had on my PS2. There are about 20 characters I have never used. Mainly because I'm lazy."

We're playing...



Daniel Dawkins
PSM3's Editor likes football, tennis and cartoon wolves.

- 1 **Football Manager** "I'm actually playing the Mac version in another window as I type. It's ruinous."
- 2 **Virtua Tennis WT** "Pristine response, endless challenge - it's blown the dust off my PSP"
- 3 **Okami** "Don't just pretend you like this game, actually buy it. That's an order. Rare crafted genius."

They're playing...



Chris Busse
Producer of *Medal Of Honor Airborne* likes going Greek.

- 1 **God Of War 2** "An even better sequel to the best game of 2005. I'm loving it"
- 2 **Need For Speed Carbon** "Simply gorgeous. I lose hours tinkering with my car."
- 3 **Resistance: Fall Of Man** "Beautiful next-gen FPS gaming with aliens. What's not to like?"

PSP Playlist

FIRST CHOICE

SECOND CHOICE

THIRD CHOICE

TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION

Pub Sony | Dev Namco
Web tekken.net

"Grabs you and doesn't let go. This is how all handheld scrapping should be. An essential buy."

PSM3 Rating **89%**



POWER STONE COLLECTION

Pub Capcom | Dev Capcom | Web capcom.com

"Slaps a broad smile on your face. Perfectly suited to handheld play and will brighten up anyone's day."

PSM3 Rating **86%**



DEF JAM: THE TAKEOVER

Pub EA | Dev EA | Web ea.com

"Where other fighting games feel floaty, every punch and stomp carries weight. Brutal."

PSM3 Rating **85%**



METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS

Pub Konami | Dev Kojima Studios | Web konami.com

"A compromised imitation of a classic, but easily one of PSP's best single-player games yet."

PSM3 Rating **83%**



FIELD COMMANDER

Pub Ubisoft | Dev Sony Online
Web fieldcommander.station.sony.com

"You get a real sense of achievement as your gang of upstarts turns the tables on your overwhelming foe."

PSM3 Rating **82%**

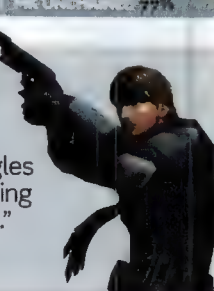


METAL GEAR ACID 2

Pub Konami | Dev Konami
Web konami.com

"Tactical Japanese card game with a pair of goggles to fool the eye into thinking the game is in 3D. Quirky."

PSM3 Rating **80%**



GITAROO MAN LIVES!

Pub Koei | Dev Koei | Web koei.co.uk

"A rhythm action game with all the visual flair of a Japanese anime and the most eclectic soundtrack ever."

PSM3 Rating **90%**

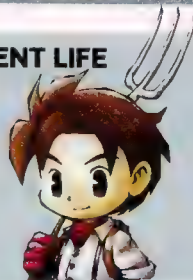


HARVEST MOON: INNOCENT LIFE

Pub Codemasters | Dev Arte Piazza
Web hmfarm.com

"Till land, sow seeds, water crops... discover what it means to feel love through the nurturing of pumpkins."

PSM3 Rating **85%**

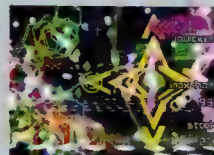


EVERY EXTEND EXTRA

Pub Q Entertainment | Dev Bandai
Web everyextendextra.com

"You play a bomb. Blow up everything in your radius and get combos for massive points. Very good indeed."

PSM3 Rating **83%**



VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR

Pub Sega | Dev Sumo Digital
Web sega.com

"Virtua Tennis experts will demolish you with shots you wouldn't believe, leaving you swearing like McEnroe."

PSM3 Rating **91%**



BURNOUT LEGENDS

Pub EA | Dev Team Fusion
Web ea.com

"If you want a fast, fun racer with great online play, then this is it. It's got loads to do."

PSM3 Rating **92%**



SOCOM: FIRETEAM BRAVO

Pub SCEE | Dev Zipper | Web socom-game.com

"An awesome online mode lets you boss the virtual war zone with a group of your mates. Terrific stuff."

PSM3 Rating **83%**



Pint, please Games that recreate that pub atmosphere



PlayStation 2

DOUBLE-TOP

PDC World Championship Darts

Pub Oxygen | Dev Mere Mortals
Web oxygenint.com

All the thrills of chucking arrows at a board, then collecting them and chucking them at the board again are contained in this game. It's not quite pub darts, mind: where are the bent flights and pints of mild?

PSM3 Rating **61%**



MULTI-BALL

Flipnic

Pub Ubisoft | Dev Ubisoft
Web ubi.com

Sadly, most pubs these days do without pinball, which is a constant heartbreaker for lovers of the silver ball. Given the size of Flipnic's play area, though, you'd need a pub with the dimensions of the inside of the Tardis to contain a table like it..

PSM3 Rating **76%**



PISSED-UP

Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude

Pub Sierra | Dev High Voltage
Web leisuersuitlarry.com

Other games contain drink - Okami's sake can destroy a giant dragon with its potency - but none simulates its effects as accurately as this, which turns Larry into a beery, urine-soaked wreck. Nice.

PSM3 Rating **80%**

@ Disagree with our choices? Write us on myspace or mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Let your word bombs at: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"



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Nice Apps

Tick up your console



£23

Born to run

App Thrustmaster RunN'Drive pad
Web thrustmaster.com

This pad is "the triathlete of gaming" apparently. What does that mean? It means the pad does not one, not two, but five – sorry, three, our maths is hopeless – things. The chief selling point is the 'optical wheel' around the D-pad, which offers extreme precision for such tasks as sniping in Hitman, or cornering in driving games. Then there's the button-mapping, which basically lets you define which button performs which function. And the third thing? That it works like a normal pad as well. We're not sure this should count as a third thing, though. Decent enough at the price.

Thumbs up

App Wireless thumbpad
Web madcatz.com

This is the latest gadget attempting to cool down the not-massively hot potato that is the topic of textual conversation during online games. It's a thumbpad that clips onto your Sixaxis and allows you to type in conversational text when online. Handy for web browsing, perhaps, although you'd be unlikely to find the time to type in "Die you motherloving bar steward" with only your thumb during a particular frantic game of Resistance. And surely it's easier to just buy a wireless keyboard if you're into web surfing? Hmm...

£15

Switched on

App Tri-Link HDMI switcher
Web joytechstore.net

Got loads of bits of kit but only one HDMI port on your TV? Well, you could get more TVs, but an easier thing might be to try this Tri-Link HDMI Switcher, which lets you plug three HDMI-equipped machines (your PS3, obviously, and, say, Sky HD or an Xbox 360) into one HDMI port, and a switch between the three sources by remote control – so you never have to get off your settee again.

£39

Three into one Stick
three HDMI gadgets into
your telly with this.

Early Warning System

Your PlayStation release schedule

Want it?
Tick it!

Game	Publisher	Out	Format	Want it? Tick it!
Rogue Galaxy	Sony	June 8	PS2	☐
Crazy Taxi: Fare Wars	Sega	June 8	PSP	☐
Pac-Man Rally	EA	June 8	PSP	☐
Armored Core 4	505 Game Street	June 22	PS3	☐
Shrek The Third	Activision	June 22	PS2	☐
The Darkness	EA	June 29	PS2	☐
Army Of Two	EA	June 29	PS3	☐
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	Activision	June 29	PS3	☐
Hot Brain	Midway	June 29	PSP	☐
Dungeons And Dragons: Tactics	Atari	June 29	PSP	☐
King Of Fighters: Maximum Impact 2	Ignition	June 29	PS2	☐
Transformers	Activision	July 20	PS3	☐
Harry Potter: Order Of The Phoenix	EA	July 20	PS3	☐
Manhunt 2	Rockstar	July 27	PS2	☐
Saints Row	THQ	July 27	PS3	☐
Stuntman: Ignition	THQ	Aug 10	PS3	☐
The Club	Sega	Aug 31	PS3	☐
Assassin's Creed	Ubisoft	Aug 31	PS3	☐
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	Ubisoft	Aug 31	PS2	☐
Earache: Axe Attack	Metro 3D	Aug 31	PS2	☐
CSI: Three Dimensions Of Murder	Ubisoft	Sep 7	PS2	☐
Medal Of Honor: Airborne	EA	Sep 7	PS3	☐
Warhawk	Sony	Sep 7	PS3	☐
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	Capcom	Sep 7	PSP	☐
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	THQ	Sep 21	PS3	☐
Blacksite: Area 51	Midway	Sep 21	PS3	☐
Haze	Ubisoft	Sep 28	PS3	☐
Ratatouille	THQ	Sep 28	PS3	☐
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	Eidos	Sep 28	PS3	☐
Stranglehold	Midway	Sep 28	PS3	☐
Dead Head Fred	D3P	Sep 28	PSP	☐
Frontlines: Fuels Of War	THQ	Oct 12	PS3	☐
Grand Theft Auto IV	Rockstar	Oct 19	PS3	☐
Pro Evolution Soccer 7	Konami	Oct 19	PS3	☐
Colin McRae: DIRT	Codemasters	Oct 19	PS3	☐
Silent Hill: Origins	Konami	Oct 26	PSP	☐
The Wheelman	Midway	Oct 26	PS3	☐
WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2008	THQ	Nov 9	PS3	☐
Devil May Cry 4	Capcom	Nov 16	PS3	☐
Aqua Teen Hunger Force: Zombie Ninja Pro-Am	Midway	Dec 28	PS2	☐



The Darkness

Take Two's 'evil demon possesses gangland criminal-em-up' is out soon and looks very good indeed. Quite literally one of PS3's darkest games.



Assassin's Creed

We're still not totally sure what this time-travelling assassin game is really about (apart from the time-travelling assassin bit), but we can't wait to find out.



Frontlines: Fuels Of War

We haven't made our brilliant Mr T-inspired "pity the fuels!" joke yet, so there it is. We don't pity this game, though – this FPS is shaping up just nicely.

ebay Going, Going, Gone PlayStation auction action

Metal Gear wall clock

For those of you who feel your kitchens just aren't military enough, why not get yourself a Metal Gear Solid Foxhound wall clock? Every time it strikes the hour, you're treated to a shout of "Snake?! Snaaaaaake!?" OK, it doesn't, but we wish it did. One of the nicer-looking items of promo tat you can get, though.



Sold \$4.99 Original Price \$4.99
Profit None

Devil May Cry comic

A 'doujinshi' is a type of Japanese comic. These are drawn by amateurs, rather than professionals, and someone's made one for Devil May Cry, entitled 'Devil May Cry – Separated Eyes'. It looks really quite stylish, although we haven't got the foggiest what's going on in it. It's not as good as The Assassin, though, the comic that won out Win A PS3 compo last issue.



Sold \$7.00 Original Price \$6.00
Profit \$1

Clank figurine

There are loads of videogame figurines, but this is one of our favourites. It's a five-and-a-half inch tall model of Clank, still in the packaging. It's enough to set any collector of game memorabilia drool all over his shoes. We're bemused by the lack of hot bidding action for poor old Clank. We'd have bought this ourselves, except the auction ended the day before payday. Damn.



Sold Nope Original Price \$19.99
Profit None

PS3 Playlist

TOP THREE

ELDER SCROLLS 4: OBLIVION

Pub Ubisoft | Dev Bethesda
Web elderscrolls.com

"An RPG offering an experience that no other PS3 title can lay claim to. It's not perfect, but feels close enough."

PSM3 Rating 93%



RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

Pub Sony | Dev Insomniac
Web us.playstation.com

"An incredibly slick, exciting PS3 showcase. A beautiful vision of an alien-infested Britain. Terrific stuff."

PSM3 Rating 89%



MOTORSTORM

Pub Sony | Dev Evolution
Web motorstorm.com

"Tough, dynamic racing. A blistering thrill ride that makes good on all of PlayStation 3's promises."

PSM3 Rating 88%



FOUR TO SIX

VIRTUA FIGHTER 5

Pub Sega | Dev AM2
Web sega.com/vf5

"Perhaps the best scrapper ever, but VF5 is such an acquired taste. Still, technically this is flawless."

PSM3 Rating 87%



VIRTUA TENNIS 3

Pub Sega | Dev Sumo
Web sega.com

"No online play, but still the best multi-player game on PS3. A must-buy for Virtua Tennis fans everywhere."

PSM3 Rating 85%



CALL OF DUTY 3

Pub Activision | Dev Treyarch
Web callofduty.com

"The only additions PS3 offers above the PS2 game is shinier, sharper graphics. Still, the next-gen starts here."

PSM3 Rating 82%



SEVEN TO NINE

TIGER WOODS 07

Pub EA | Dev EA
Web easports.com/tigerwoods07

"Still the best console golf game, but trapped in the bunker of its own success. It's all very familiar fare."

PSM3 Rating 81%



NBA STREET HOMECOURT

Pub EA | Dev EA
Web easports.com/nbastreet4

"More of a showing-off sim than anything, but a fun one at that. It makes you feel like The Man."

PSM3 Rating 80%



TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8

Pub Activision | Dev Neversoft
Web tonyhawksproject8.com

"A solid, back-to-basics return to the glory days of the Hawk. He's still delivering the goods."

PSM3 Rating 80%



TEN AND ELEVEN

RIDGE RACER 7

Pub Sony | Dev Namco
Web ridgeracer7.net

"The ultimate Ridge - glowing with power and delivering exactly what you want."

PSM3 Rating 79%

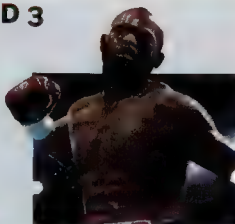


FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

Pub EA | Dev EA
Web easports.com

"Fundamentally no different to the PlayStation 2 game, but worth it if you're new to Round 3."

PSM3 Rating 78%

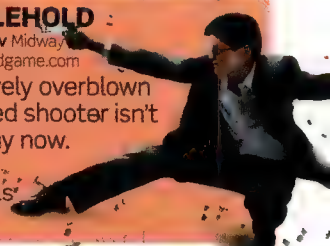


PSM3'S MOST WANTED

STRANGLEHOLD

Pub Midway | Dev Midway
Web strangleholdgame.com

"The massively overblown Woo-inspired shooter isn't too far away now. We'll have more details very soon."



AVOID

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: TARGET IN SIGHT

"This is one of the worst games we've played for ages. A disgrace on pretty much every level."

PSM3 Rating 28%



FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES

"A budget PlayStation 2 game wearing its big sister's high-definition make-up. Stick to Burnout!"

PSM3 Rating 36%



SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

"You'll start crying when you remember what Sonic games used to be like in the '90s."

PSM3 Rating 47%



Teen idols When Heat's favourite celebs hit PS2



HIT ME, BABY

Britney's Dance Beat

Pub THQ | Dev Metro Web thq.com
A Bemani game from Britney's pre-bald, pre-mental days. Sadly, this game for the kids is scuppered by only having five tracks, and being harder than carving your name into a diamond with your nose. Oh, and Britney's barely in it.

PSM3 Rating 58%



LICENSE REVOKED

Mary-Kate And Ashley: Sweet 16

Pub Acclaim | Dev Acclaim
Web mary-kateandashley.com
Subtitled Licensed To Drive, this is a party game in which MK, Ashley and their chums drive around a board indulging in rubbish minigames, from shopping to terrible actual racing bits. Worst celeb tie-in ever.

PSM3 Rating 33%



VOTED OFF

The X-Factor Sing

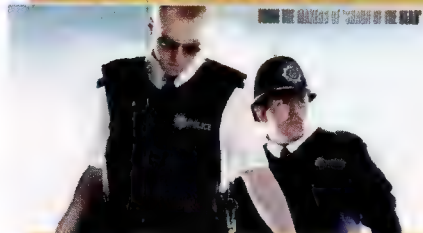
Pub Black Bean | Dev Milestone
Web blackbeangames.com
Horrendous singing game, featuring terrible songs from the likes of Mel C and Ronan Keating. The only vague links with the X-factor are second-long clips of Simon Cowell and contestants from series one. Remember Cassie? Thought not.

PSM3 Rating 18%

@ Got a PS3 question? Then we'll answer it. Send your next-gen console queries to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "PS3 question"

Now Showing

Movies for your console
DVD New on DVD



Hot Fuzz

Director Edgar Wright | **Starring** Simon Pegg, Nick Frost, Martin Freeman, Bill Nighy, Robert Popper
Many people's favourite funny movie of last year, in which Simon Pegg and Nick Frost investigate a spate of grisly murders in a sleepy village. The whole thing becomes utterly ludicrous, of course, and demands repeated viewing. Go buy.

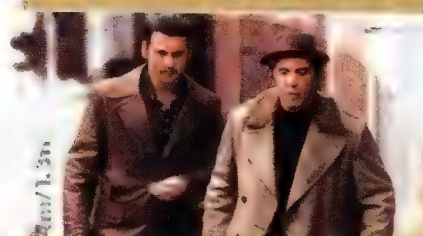
UMD selection



The Office Series 2

Directors Ricky Gervais, Stephen Merchant | **Starring** Ricky Gervais, Martin Freeman, Lucy Davis
Not actually a movie, we realise, but Series 2 of The Office is, as you probably know, brilliant. It certainly pisses over the other UMD releases this month, although as those consist of nothing other than a couple of Hellraiser films, that's not difficult. Anyway, Series 2 sees the Swindon branch of Wernham Hogg merged into the Slough branch, with much laughter and many tears. Like the PSM3 office. Apart from the laughter, that is.

Blu-ray choice



Donnie Brasco

Director: Mike Newell | **Starring** Al Pacino, Johnny Depp, Michael Madsen, Bruno Kirby, James Russo
We were going to put Cruel Intentions in this slot – lady-on-lady saliva swapping in hi-def? Nice – but given that the rest of that film is bum, we went for the classic Donnie Brasco instead. Seeing Johnny Depp's FBI agent Joe Pistone infiltrate the mafia, led by Michael Madsen's character, Sonny Black. Al Pacino is the real star, of course – because he's Al Pacino – in the role of mobster 'Lefty' Ruggiero, but the whole thing shines. Damn fine.

PSM3 Tunes Where you get great music for free

You Know I'm No Good

Amy Winehouse

She's better at drinking than singing, certainly, but that doesn't mean songs like this aren't delicious slabs of soul all the same.

Get it: mtv.com/music/downloads



Lips Are Unhappy

Lucky Soul

Classically elegant pop that sways along in a way that sounds quite

grown-up without actually sounding old. Personally, our lips tend to be unhappy without our morning sausage sarnies, but each to their own, really.

Get it: myspace.com/luckysoulluckysoul

Interpol

Slow Hands

Their new album is out soon, so why not listen to this piece of menacing, growling angst-rock to get yourself in the mood? Off you do, then.

Get it: matadorrecords.com/interpol

I Know Kung-Fu

Shitdisco

Ridiculously raucous shouty rock that, if we're honest, is in here more because we like the band name than anything else. Still very good stuff indeed, though.

Get it: myspace.com/shitdisco



The Magic Position

Patrick Wolf

Download the video to this absurd, chirpy piece of hippy-rock now. It looks a bit like a weird kids' TV show and it'll make you feel happy. Or sad, if you don't like it. You will, though.

Get it: patrickwolf.com

@ Tune-up Send us your music links and we'll stick 'em in the mag. Email psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "Music"

Object of Desire

Gorgeous, PS3-connecting Bluetooth hi-fi



Sony CMT-U1BR Bluetooth-enabled hi-fi

This is the first Bluetooth micro hi-fi system ever, apparently. This is good, because it means it can wirelessly receive music from other Bluetooth-enabled kit in your house – for instance, your PlayStation 3 – and play said tunes through its speakers, hassle-free. Sounds good, doesn't it?

The CMT-U1BR uses, to quote the press release, "a combination of aluminium woofer cones and horn ducts to generate a rich, satisfying bass." So the audio quality is pretty damn good indeed. It's not quite up there with that of a five grand megasystem the size of a carthorse, obviously, but it's excellent all the

same, whether you're playing MP3s or boring old CDs (loaded through a vertical slot). There's FM radio too, of course, and a USB socket enabling you to plug equipment like MP3-equipped personal stereos into it. And it looks nice too, all shiny and metallic like a freshly-polished robot. Or something like that.

And for what's a reasonably budget price – a mere 300 quids – you can hardly complain, can you? So wander down to Currys.digital, get one of these in, wirelessly connect your PlayStation 3 to it, and get your groove on to your collection of Ray Quinn MP3s. What? What's wrong with Ray Quinn? He's brilliant.

Tech Spec

Price £300

Features USB connection, FM radio, A2DP Bluetooth

Web sony.com

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I DIDN'T LIKE THE TASTE AT FIRST	0909 925 6041

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With Photos Big firm chested girls seeks good time. No string as returning back in a year. 0908 110 4058	With Photos These girls only come out to play in the evenings. All types & ages up to 50. 0908 110 4058	With Photos Loves to please men. These girls just want action. No strings any age/types. 0908 110 4058

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Images of various games, including: World Series Poker, Subbuteo, The Legend of Spyro, Sexy Football, International Rugby Sevens, Lara Croft Tomb Raider, Mobile Brain Trainer, Pub Quiz, Fruit Machine, Black Jack Deluxe, Crash Bandicoot, Pub Fight, Pirates Sexi Port, Sexy Bubbles, Wild Waterslides, Steve Davis Snooker, Porn Manager, Pimp Ride Under a Hood, Dirty Dimples, Hitman.

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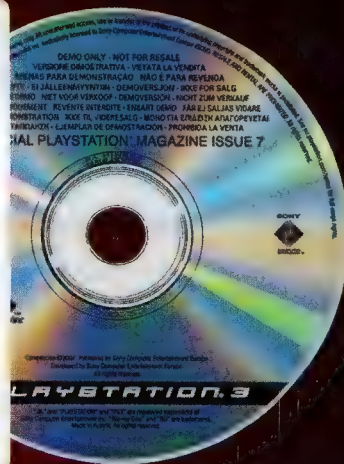
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5 things to remember this month



Ratchet & Clank know how to move
"There's a lot of pelvic thrusting. It's terrifying"
page 34



Witness the power of the Transformers
"Cars can be picked up and thrown about like Matchbox miniatures"
page 23



Proving Ground will be massive
"It's the biggest skate-space you've seen throughout the entire series"
page 58



Pirates is another crap movie tie-in
"The most striking disappointment here is just how 'old-gen' it all looks"
page 66



Ancient Greece had the best women
"Leap out of GoW2's pool to find these two accommodating young ladies"
page 88

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1 **WWE Smackdown 2007** - Exclusive hands-on

- 2 Reviews special featuring... *The Darkness* - PS3's most macabre game busted open...
- 3 ... *Ninja Gaiden Sigma* - the hardest thing since eating diamonds is finally here, and there's also...
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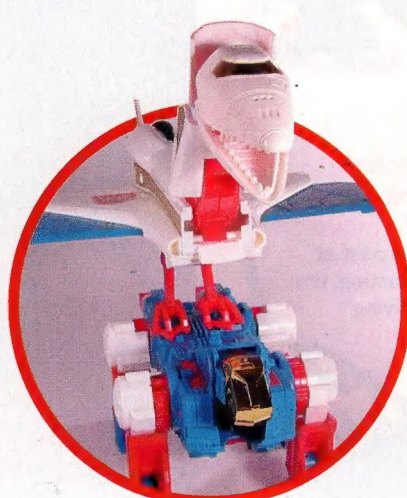
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"It turns into a microscope!"

Taking a closer look at the lamest Transformers ever created.



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While everyone remembers Optimus Prime and Jazz, here's a set of the less well-known and rather more, well, crap of the Transformers, ownership of which would of course result in a playground kicking. And justifiably so. Just look at this lot, would you?

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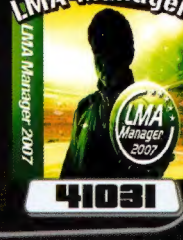


GAME OF the week

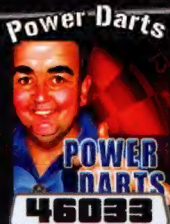
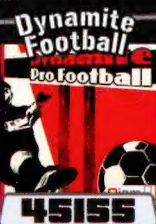


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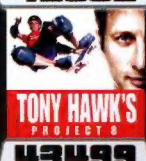


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